# UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

TEACHING THE SKILLS OF TRANSLATING IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS AMONG EFL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITÉ DES LETTRES ET DES SCIENCES HUMAINES DE BAMAKO

MAMOUTOU COULIBALY

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By

MAMOUTOU COULIBALY

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Mamoutou Coulibaly, declare that this Dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Prof. D.S.Y. AMUZU

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

NAME OF CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr. Charles, OWU-EWIE

SIGNATURE:
DATE:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DEDICATION

To my mother

For her unsurpassed dedication and love.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language
FLA	Foreign Language Acquisition
L1	First Language
SL	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text
AmE	American English
BrE	British English
ULSHB	Université des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako
FLLSH	Faculté des Lettres, Langues et Sciences du Langage

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore difficulties encountered by undergraduate learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in translating idiomatic expressions into French (L2). The goal was to identify the specific difficulties they pose to learners. Identifying the causes of the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions into French and proposing translation-enhancing strategies for idioms is thought to be of interest to learners and teachers alike.

The study was designed as a qualitative exploratory case study.

The key findings derived from analysis by the researcher revealed that EFL undergraduate students find it particularly difficult to recognise and understand idiomatic expressions in English, and recreate them accurately in French. In the first place, the study has shown that EFL learners fail to recognise that idiomatic expressions make a whole semantic unit. They transfer the lexicogrammatical patterns of English idioms to French, on the other hand. As a result of this two-faceted difficulty, i.e.failure to recognise idioms as polylexical structures with semanticunity and strong tendency for reproducing source-text lexicogrammatical patterns, learners resort predominantly to paraphrasing as a translation strategy for rendering idiomatic expressions. In tackling the difficult task of idiom translation, omission and FLidiomatic expression transfer into target text (L2) are widely employedby undergraduate students.

In addition to identifying translation difficulties encountered by students, the present study also suggests idiom translation-enhancing solutions through an integrated approach to idioms, with a wider, systematic, exposure to idiomatic expressions through translation classes targeting idioms and explicit idiom instruction in reading

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comprehension and linguistics courses. Another solution for enhancing skills in idiomatic expression translation is teacher preparation for translation classes.

Additional findings are described in the dissertation. These findings relate in particular to word class divergence and collocational patterns as recurrent translation difficulties experienced by students. In other words, they fail to make the lexicogrammatical transformations required in translation process and translate predominantly word class for word class, as well as they combine words following the source-text collocational patterns, resulting in unnatural, atypical phrasesin French.

Finally, a systematic approach to idiom translation strategies for EFL undergraduate learners has been recommended. This approach consists of a step-by-step introduction to idiom translation strategies based on the closeness of formal and semantic features characteristic of idiomatic expressions.

The study includes the need and recommendations for further studies.
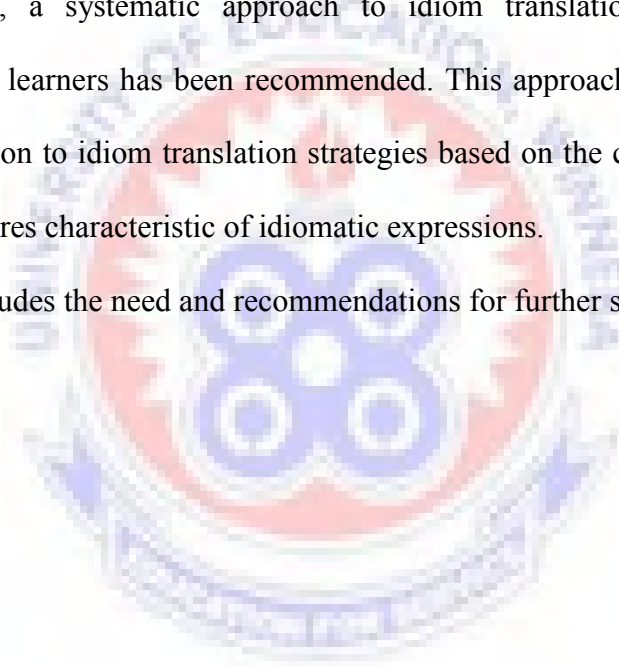
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Throughout history translation has been instrumental in interlingual communication. Garbovsky (2007) noted that translation theory and practice is dispersed and fragmentary in time and space. According to the translation scholar translations have been documented as early as the Third Millennium before Christ, with the translation of Hebrew religious texts into Greek, the Septuagint. A point also argued by the writer is that the history of translation can be traced back to earlier period, since the lack of written evidence does not mean the absence of translations in earlier times (p. 28 translation mine[1]).

In Western tradition, the theory and practice of translation was closely bound with Greek, Latin (see the Septuagint and the Vulgate), and subsequently European vernaculars. Etienne Dolet in France, Martin Luther in Germany, and William Tyndale in England exerted a long-lasting influence on their respective vernacular languages through their scientific and religious translations. According to translation theorists (Garbovsky, 2007; Munday, 2008) early attempts at translation theory and practice were dominated by the unsolved opposition between word-for-word and sense-for-sense approach. For a very long period of time translation into European vernaculars was frowned upon. Greek, and subsequently Latin, was seen as a superior, more sophisticated language, repository of scientific knowledge and religious arcane. Native European languages were not deemed to have the same richness to convey the full range of intricate, subtle nuances of religious thought, cultural attainments, and scientific inquiry. Because the first translators dealt mostly with the Scriptures and scientific texts, some of them were accused of heresy and distorting the truth through

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[1] All translations from Russian into English and/or French are mine, unless otherwise stated in the course of the study.

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their translations, and consequently burnt at the stake (see W. Tyndale in England and E. Dolet in France). Translating and or interpreting remain a highly risky undertaking up to date when it comes to sacred texts. The publication of the Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie in 1988 and its subsequent translation into different languages caused a public outcry across the Islamic world. The novel was perceived as a blasphemous interpretation of the Prophet's life, therefore a standing fatwa was issued by the clerical leadership in Iran against its author.

From a broader historic perspective translation was generally considered a language learning and teaching tool referred to as the grammar-translation method. This method, sometimes called the classical or pedagogical method, was extensively applied in teaching and learning ―dead‖ languages, namely Greek and Latin. The pedagogical translation revolved around grammar and vocabulary patterns of the language being studied by learners. In the words of Munday (2008), this method is still practised today in second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) teaching and learning (p.25), although it has come under heavy criticisms for its decontextualized approach to translation (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1972; Catford, 1965; Munday, 2008). Moreover, the overall emphasis put on testing vocabulary and grammar over raising learners' linguistic awareness and skills through contrastive analysis of languages' similarities and dissimilarities contributed to lowering translation as an instruction tool.

Typically, the relation to translation in language learning and teaching has been characterised by conflicting views, with strong advocates and fierce opponents pitched at the two extremes of the divide (Cook, 2001; Källkvit, 2004; Carreres, 2010). Emphasising the growing awareness among scholars that translation can play a significant role in second language acquisition (SLA), Carreres (2010) notes in

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particular that its proponents acknowledge the need for further empirical studies to determine the role of translation in conjunction with other language learning and teaching activities (p.18). For translation to significantly contribute to SLA, novel approaches are to be explored and put into practice. This view is strengthened by Newmark (1988) and Howart (as cited in Anderman & Rogers, 2003, p.120) who points out that ―the practice of translation has been condemned so strenuously for so long without any really convincing reasons that it is perhaps time the profession took another look at it."

1.1 General Concepts

1.1.1 Developments in translation theory

Although the practice of translation has been established over millennia, translation studies is a relatively new academic discipline which originated in the wake of the Second World War (Holmes, 1972; Newmark, 1988; Garbovsky, 2007; Munday, 2008).The development of translation theory and practice has never been straightforward or linear: the discipline evolved through stages. It is a commonly held view in scholarly literature that the opposition between source-text and target-text approaches to translation remains the unsolved problem at the core of translation theoretical models and problem-solving solutions (Newmark, 1988, 1991, 2003, 2009; Garbovsky, 2007; Munday, 2008). ―Translation", asserts Newmark (2003, p.32), ―in its very essence does not change." In fact, translation is approached by theorists and practising translators (not uncommonly the same individuals) from different perspectives based, for the most part, on the link between translation theory and linguistic theory, as Kohn (ibid.) pointed out to challenge the polemical view of translation unchangeability claimed earlier by Newmark.

By contrast, from the ―literal-for-literal‖ versus ―sense-for-sense‖ age-old debate that characterised approaches to translation over many centuries, contemporary translation theories developed in close bond with dominant linguistic models (see Halliday for Catford, Newmark, and Baker; Chomsky for Nida, etc.). New text type (treatises, legal documents, commercial contracts, advertisements, notices, websites, etc.), text function, translation purpose, translation brief approaches to the field of translation brought about by a globalised world accorded greater importance to translation theory and practice. This growth will result into a shift away from the opposition between literal and free translation characterising the ―pre-linguistics‖ stage following the periodization of translation history[2] put forth by Newmark (2009). These primary features of translation (text type, text function, translation purpose, translation brief, target readership, etc.), which received little attention in literary translation dominating the initial period of translation, will be brought to the fore in successive, but not clearly delimited stages of translation theory.

The first era of translation came to be known as the *empirical*, *pre-linguistic* era in Bassnett‘s and Newmark‘s respective phrases, drawing mainly on literary translation. The second era will mark a point of departure from the empirical period; it will be termed the *linguistic* or *communicative era*. This stretched from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s (Newmark, 1988, 2009; Garbovsky, 2007). The third period will be known as the *pragmatic era*, focused on communication situation in dealing with translation.

The *pragmatic* or *functional stage* (from around 1970) in translation brought to centre stage text type, text function, translation purpose and target readership. The new approach consisting of paying closer attention to text type in translation as a

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[2] Newmark (2009) differentiated four periods in translation history: (1) empirical or pre-linguistic era, (2) linguistic or communicative era, (3) pragmatic or functional stage, and (4) ethical/aesthetic stage.

process is not mere accident. According to Newmark (1988, 2009) and Baker (2001), this shift in translation approach was driven by the changing nature of translation texts and growing importance attached to translation studies. Whereas the ―literal-for-literal‖ and ―sense-for-sense‖ approaches to translation were mostly concerned with religious and literary texts, the rapid growth of commerce and trade, technical advances and cultural attainments, information and communication technologies in a globalised world, brought about new kinds of text: advertisement, notice, contract, legal document, treatise, etc.

In more recent years, Newmark (2009) has identified a fourth stage, which he termed *ethical/aesthetic*, from around 2000 onwards (p.21). Explaining the specific features distinguishing this stage, the translation analyst (self-description) writes that authoritative, official and documentary texts characterise this stage, in addition to serious literary works. In this stage of translation, Newmark (2009) asserts that gender-specific, racial, religious, colour and age, etc. prejudices are to be addressed extra-textually by the translator in footnotes.

Periodization of translation is a laudable academic undertaking, although with limited practical application for translation practice. As acknowledged by Newmark (2009, p. 21) the different stages or turns in translation theory are ‗cumulative‘, without clear-cut boundaries. More importantly, the periodical histories described by translation scholars are generally based on arbitrary, fuzzy timelines. Their periodization does not describe concrete translations with their strengths and weaknesses, for translators to take their cue (Garbovsky, 2007; Pym, 2010).

At closer look, the main driving force behind translation turns appears to be text type, which determines approaches to translation over the course of time. Text function and translation purpose, albeit important in determining translation process

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and end-product, cannot be regarded as defining features of translation, since shift in translation function and purpose with an alternative translation is common practice.

The *functional/pragmatic* approach (3) in translation history has practical implications for translating idiomatic expressions in EFL context, for it puts emphasis on the target readership, to the extent that the translated text is to convey a message crafted to the target-text language, fulfilling its lexicogrammatical constraints and cultural expectations. Therefore, achieving fluent, smooth translation, not disconcertingly blocking through atypical word combinations, involves good command of formulaic elements that represent a sizeable proportion of language (Wray, 2002; Nesselhauf, 2003, 2004; Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Seretan, 2011), and, therefore, play an important role in communication.

Formulaic language or sequences, also termed phraseologisms, phraseological units, or more traditionally phraseology, are typically ready-made multi-word units that give spoken and written discourse fluency, naturalness, and increased emotional expression. The configuration of formulaic language or phraseology differs widely and encompasses different constituents across linguistic perspectives. It is beyond the scope of the study to present a detailed account of the broad and narrow sense of phraseology prevailing in the literature on the subject.

However, it is important to note that phraseology in the broad sense is typically used to refer to the wide range of recurrent patterns of the lexicon such as collocations, phrasal verbs, compound nouns, idioms, routine formulas such as phatic expressions and greetings, proverbs and sayings, clichés, authorial quotations, similes, etc. In contrast, sentence-like and clause-like ready-made constructions such as proverbs and sayings, authorial quotations, slogans, and clichés fall short, on structural and semantic grounds, of being included in phraseology in the narrow sense

of the word. Put in other words, phraseology in the broad sense includes elements with communicative function in utterance (written or spoken), whereas the term phraseology in the narrow sense includes elements with nominative function (collocations, compounds, phrasal verbs, and idioms, etc.) that function as part of a sentence or clause, but these ready-made in reproduction word combinations are not capable of being used independently as stand-alone elements.

While there is profound disagreement about the number of elements participating in phraseology across pluridisciplinary research, both broad and narrow approaches to the discipline agree that idiomatic expressions, the concern of the researcher, fall within the scope of phraseology.

1.1.2 A brief overview of phraseology

Many researchers (Kunin, 1996; Burger, H., D. Dobrovol'skij, P. Kühn & N. R. Norrick, 2007; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008; Seretan, 2011) hold the view that the term phraseology was first introduced by Ch. Bally in ―Traité de stylistique" and ―Traité de stylistique française" (1905, 1909), to account for connected words as part of stylistics as suggested by the titles of the two successive treaties. It is important to bear in mind that the linguistic phenomenon of ready-made word combinations was acknowledged earlier by researchers in different fields (Wray, 2002, p.7). However, it is the credit of Ch. Bally to approach and describe the linguistic phenomenon systematically. In the words of Kunin (1996, p.5), Ch. Bally in his first treatise in 1905 differentiated four categories of word combinations:

(a) _**Groupements libres ou passagers'**_ (free combinations, associations). These represent a category of word combination in which words are produced, freely combined in the process of communication and fall apart afterwards. Their separate meanings are not constrained by affinity

as is the case with collocations or more frozen word combinations such as idiomatic expressions.

(b) **'Groupements usuels'** (usual phrases, collocations). Word combinations preserving a certain individual meaning of their component words, allowing substitution, rearrangement. For example, **_une grave maladie (une dangereuse, sérieuse maladie'**)

(c) **_Séries phraséologiques'** (idioms). These are word combinations in which two contiguous words become almost one. The degree of their semantic fixedness is high, expressed primarily in the first participating word in the combination. Such a combination allows rearrangement of the constituent words.

For example, **_remporter une victoire; courir un danger'**.

(d) **'Unités phraséologiques'** (phraseological units). These are special word combinations in which constituent parts have not preserved their separate meanings. They have blended into one non-decomposable semantic unit. The rearrangement of their components is impossible. The following examples will help illustrate phraseological units.

(1) *Couper les cheveux en quatre* for to split hairs.

(2) *Prêter main forte* for to lend a hand

Ch. Bally (as discussed in Kunin, 1996) will retain only two major types of word combinations in a further work *_Traité de stylistique française'* published in1909. These are summarised as follows: (1) strings allowing rearrangement of their parts called (a) **free combinations**, and (2) combinations not allowing rearrangement termed (b) **phraseological units**. This division is based on the degree of fixedness (frozenness, in modern term) of the constituent words. In particular, Kunin (1996)

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emphasises that Ch. Bally considered collocations (***groupements usuels***) and idioms (***séries phraséologiques***) as intermediary categories. Arguing in this vein, Kunin (1996) emphasises that Ch. Bally held the concept of fixedness of the constituents participating in word combination as the primary property of phraseological units. The word combination is assimilated to a single word called word-identificator (p.6).

For a very long time, the study of phraseology was an integral part of stylistics or lexicology (see Ch. Bally, Soviet tradition of lexicology). The need for distinguishing phraseology from stylistics was first raised by Polivanov (Kunin, 1996.). ―The study of phraseology", writes Kunin (1996, p.12) ―was further developed by V. Vinogradov, who turned it into an independent linguistic discipline[3]".

However, it has been pointed out by various authors that the field of phraseology remains a challenging, daunting academic discipline that scholars sternly warned against decades ago. Malkiel (1959), as quoted in Strässler (1983, p.17), advised ―to steer clear of any reference to the ill-defined category of idioms or phrasal formulas." Similarly, Johnson-Laird (1993, p.vii) reiterates this pronouncement: ―If natural language had been designed by a logician, idioms would not exist". These blunt pronouncements are intended to call attention to the intractable, often conflicting definitional and classification problems faced by researchers who embark on tackling phraseology as a broad field of inquiry. In spite of the terminological problems involved in defining the properties and delimiting the subject matter of the discipline, attempts were made by linguists from different theoretical perspectives to capture the complex aspects of phraseology.

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[3]All translations from Russian are mine, unless otherwise stated in the course of the study.

1.1.3 Terminological, definitional and classification problems of phraseology

In many places in literature, the term phraseology is used concurrently with a large number of other terms to denote the general field encompassing a variety of types of word combinations. These terms include formulaic language or sequences, phraseological units, and phraseologisms. The criteria used by researchers to identify and classify these heterogeneous kinds of word combinations for linguistic analysis vary from one researcher to another because they draw on different theoretical frameworks to approach phraseology. Thus, phraseology will be approached differently by theoretical linguists, psycholinguists, cognitive-linguists, corpus-linguists, and contrastive linguists. Therefore, the need for clear-cut, generally accepted definition of the concept of phraseology and its scope has been emphasised by researchers (Granger & Meunier 2008, Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008). Granger and Meunier (2008), for example, pointed out that phraseology is a term surrounded with a lot of controversy in academia. Many researchers, they further explain, tend to define the term based on structure and morphology patterns. Moon (1998, p.8) on the other hand noted that ―the field of phraseology has of course been extensively researched" by scholars. Moon (1998, p.9) stressed that ―traditional approaches" to phraseology are predominantly based on theory, with a special focus on ―typology, semantics, and syntactic behaviour". She, instead, aimed at exploring the use of idioms in a broader context as they occur in corpus data; the rationale being to take account of their widespread use in spoken and written language.

―Phraseologism" according to Gries (2008, p.35) ―is defined as the co-occurrence of a form or a lemma of a lexical item and one or more additional linguistic elements of various kinds which functions as one semantic unit in a clause

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or sentence and whose frequency of co-occurrence is larger than expected on the basis of chance".

Multi-word structure involving single words or word-forms bound by affinity, proximity, is the key feature of phraseologism as defined by Gries (2008). This definition seems to adopt the concept of phraseology in the narrow sense of the term, thus excluding longer stretches of ready-made lexical chunks such as proverbs and sayings, which can function as stand-alone, independent clauses or sentences in written or spoken communication.

In the present study criteria for delineating different elements participating in phraseology will be looked at in detail in the literature review. I will first look at criteria used for situating idiomatic expressions in the broader category of phraseology.

Traditionally, the criteria offered by linguists for delineating idiomatic expressions from other ready-made for reproduction elements are associated with three characteristic features: ***multi-word structure***, ***frozenness***, and ***idiomaticity*** (Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008, p.28).The stylistic property of idiomatic expressions, however, is hardly taken into account when it comes to classifying them, although the expressiveness and emotional load conveyed by idiomatic expressions is often used as marker in terms of stylistic use in written and spoken utterances.

In translation, Retsker (1982) drew attention to the point that phraseological units (his own term) should be approached from the perspective of stylistics as their functional, pragmatic, value is most obvious in this respect. In the same line of argument, Baker (1992) indicated that idioms and fixed expressions (her terminology) set context for communication through shared experiences and values (p.64). Furthermore, insights gained from contrastive phraseology and translation theory and

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practice can help define and classify idiomatic expressions through their motivation, semantic range, and frequency dependent on usage.

Proceeding from cross-linguistic perspective, formal equivalence of idiomatic expressions will be seen as less important across languages. Indeed, a close look at idiomatic expressions in English and French will show that the lexicogrammatical patterns of their idiom repertoires present different word classes and lexical items, although the functional or pragmatic meaning of the whole unit is preserved in translation. To substantiate the point that formal equivalence is seldom attained in contrastive idiom systems, let us consider the following English idiomatic expressions and their counterparts in French, paying particular attention to their divergent syntactic structure and lexical composition.

1. to come a cropper (faire chou blanc, se casser la figure)

2. to go the whole hog (ne pas faire les choses à moitié)

3. to look daggers at (foudroyer du regard).

The typology of phraseological units laid down by Vinogradov, according to Burger *et al*. (2007), is dominant in the literature up to date. His taxonomy is centred on three types of word combination (phraseological fusion or idiom proper, phraseological unit, phraseological combination) that can be found in other languages. Still, it must be recognised that their formal distribution is not identical across languages. In other words, the lexicogrammatical forms of source-text idioms are not preserved in target text. This asymmetry in cross-linguistic idiom systems suggests that idioms, regardless of their internal configuration and syntactic behaviour, will still retain significant pragmatic function.

To conclude, so far idioms have been defined intra-linguistically only by linguists across different perspectives. The criteria (multi-word structure, frozenness,

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and idiomaticity or conventionalised meaning) adopted by linguists as idiom defining features are insufficient for they fail to capture the stylistic markedness of idiom. Translation perspective on idiomatic expressions provides the unique opportunity to look at their stylistic dimension beyond variation in lexical composition and grammatical arrangement.

1.1.4   Formulaic language and language proficiency

The point has been made by researchers from across perspectives that as a foreign language learning and teaching tool, the grammar-translation method, for a considerable amount of time, has been practised in complete neglect of other approaches to language learning and teaching. While translation theorists strongly criticised the decontextualized approach to translation dominant in the classical method used for ‗dead‗ and modern languages, vocabulary researchers consider that the overarching importance given to morphology and syntax did not allow much attention to vocabulary instruction. In particular Boers and Lindstromberg (2008) point out that vocabulary as a language learning tool has not received close attention until recently. For Boers and Lindstromberg, vocabulary should be understood in the broad sense of the word, encompassing single-word items and multi-word expressions such as ―idioms, collocations and semi-fixed phrases in general" (pp. 1-2).

Achieving proficiency in second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) requires a combination of skills in grammar and vocabulary from non-native learners. It is widely acknowledged that individual lexical items are lesser indicators of language proficiency compared to formulaic elements for non-native speakers. As Conklin and Schmitt (2008) have observed, formulaic elements make up a great proportion of English and are readily found in a number of domains and registers

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(p.72). The authors exemplify the ubiquity of formulaic sequences in different fields as follows:

1. Expressing a concept: put someone out to pasture (idiom);

2. State a widely-held belief, truth or advice based on experience: a stitch in time saves nine (proverb);

3. Provide phatic expressions, routine formulas for social interaction: nice weather today (routine formula);

4. Structuring discourse: on the other hand (language structure)

5. Domain-related phraseology used for furthering precision and efficiency: blood pressure is 140 over 60 (compound noun).

Formulaic language has been defined in widely different ways and terms such as phraseology, phraseologisms, phraseological units, encompassing different constituents (Wray, 2002, 2009; Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Gries, 2008; Seretan, 2011). In particular Wray (2009, p.266) puts forth the following definition of formulaic language:

> For most researchers, the term ‗formulaic language' refers to two or more words which may or may not be adjacent and which have a particular mutual affinity that gives them a joint grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, or textual effect greater than the sum of the parts.

As can be seen from this definition of the term formulaic language or sequences generally accepted in recent years (Wray & Perkins 2000; Wray 2002, 2009; Seretan, 2011), formulaic language is a generic term covering a wide variety of linguistic units functioning as different word classes (nouns, verbs and their complements, adverbs, prepositions, etc.) and it is commonly used to mark naturalness, fluency, increased expressivity in communication situations. They are typically fixed word combinations and present a sharp contrast to free word combinations, which, on the whole, pose

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fewer difficulties in understanding and reproducing, and can carry wider syntactic functions.

The degree of syntactic flexibility and semantic unity characterising formulaic elements, however, is variable. Baker (1992), for instance, differentiates clearly between idioms and fixed expressions at semantic level: idiomatic or literal understanding. In the sense of the translation theorist, idioms fall into the category defined by theoretical linguists as *pure idioms*, whilst fixed expression is an umbrella term for a large range of linguistic constructions characterised by a certain degree of routine reproduction in utterance. These include, but not limited to, greetings, clichés, and proverbs and sayings. At the semantic level, their primary difference with idioms lies in their typically literal understanding, not figurative as is the case with idioms. At the syntactic level, they share ready-made reproduction, degree of frozenness with so-called pure idioms. Baker (1992, p.64) further explains that idioms and fixed expressions ‗perform a stabilizing function in communication‗ through aspects of shared experience (bond) they convey in utterance. Put in other words, they set a context for communication, establishing interpersonal relationships between speakers. As we shall see in the illustrative examples that will follow, idioms and fixed expressions have a communicative function that plain words fail to fill, as a rule.

(1) Have a safe trip (fixed expression used for social interaction).

(2) It is a bitter pill to swallow (idiomatic expression for some difficult experience that must be accepted).

Baker (1992) proceeded from a translation-oriented perspective to draw a basic distinction between idioms and fixed expressions. This fundamental distinction is established at the level of semantic understanding: figurative or literal meaning. Typically, the level of understanding (figurative or literal) is a characteristic feature to

bear in mind when dealing with translation. While linguists from different theoretical perspectives make no clear-cut delimitation between heterogeneous formulaic elements, for they flow rather into a continuum (free or variable combination, collocation, and more fixed word combinations such as idioms and proverbs), in translation context, semantic understanding (literal or figurative) is a key feature in differentiating between formulaic sequences. Sticking with our previous example (a bitter pill to swallow), it is amply clear that the expression is polysemous (literal and figurative meaning). To swallow a bitter pill can be used literally to denote (1) a piece of medicine that has a bad taste, and the same expression can be used idiomatically to refer to (2) some bad situation that must be accepted (Contrast with to sweeten, sugar, or gilt the pill).

Consequently, the internal organisation, in other words multi-word composition of different elements and their syntactic behaviour (fixedness or relative flexibility) are not considered primary properties posing translation difficulty. From the wider category of formulaic sequences, idioms are seen as linguistic constructions assigned figurative meaning, as compared to other set word combinations such as collocations and compounds, which have predominantly literal meaning. The following examples using the key word picture will help illustrate the distinction to be made at semantic level between compound, collocation, and idiom.

1. Compound: black and white picture

2. Collocation: take a picture

3. Idiom: put somebody in the picture.

In spite of the evident agreement amongst phraseologists and translation theorists that collocations are important and difficult in language acquisition for non-native learners, the concept of collocation itself has not been extensively researched

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(Nesselhauf, 2003, 2004; Seretan, 2011). In her analysis based on a small-scale sample (32) of German advanced learners of English in verb-noun collocation in free production, Nesselhauf (2003) stressed the importance of L1-L2 differences in collocation patterns. Consequently, she drew the conclusion that the interference of L1 is strong on L2 collocation production. These findings could be applied straightforward to collocations in translation, for translators/learners tend to mirror the collocational patterns of the source text onto the target text, as pointed out by Newmark (1988) and Baker (1992).

Learners hardly discern the combinatory machinery (collocation patterning) specific to the constituents of their language pair. Although mirroring lexicogrammatical patterns of two languages for establishing similarities is a first step towards language acquisition, it can, if left unchecked, lead to translation errors difficult to correct, for the differences between languages may be overlooked and become entrenched in the process.

Differences in word combination patterns point to the kinds of difficulties (noun phrases, prepositional errors, verbal transitivity) that collocations and idiomatic expressions pose to EFL learners. Formulaic elements are difficult structures in producing (collocations) and understanding (idioms) for EFL learners.

The present study, therefore, is concerned with difficulties arising in translating idiomatic expressions from English (FL) into French (L2). The study is focused on idiomatic expressions because they stand out as difficult constructions at semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic level.

1.1.5 Translating idiomatic expressions

Idiomatic expressions represent a narrow subclass in the larger category of formulaic elements. Their definition and classification continue to be an unsolved

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debate in scholarly literature despite the pervasiveness of the linguistic phenomenon across languages and a growing body of knowledge gained in recent years from different linguistic perspectives (Langlotz, 2006; Gries, 2008; Granger & Meunier, 2008; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008).

Idiomatic expressions differ, in a number of respects, from other formulaic elements such as proverbs and sayings, collocations, compounds, greetings, clichés, similes, authorial quotations, etc. Traditionally, they have been described and typologically categorised based on their syntactic, semantic features and pragmatic function (Moon, 1998; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008).

Another way of looking at idiomatic expressions is approaching them from translation perspective. In addition to the multiword, frozenness, and idiomaticity (conventionalised meaning) criteria for idiom definition and delimitation proposed in different linguistic perspectives such as theoretical linguistics, corpus linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and contrastive phraseology, insights into idiom properties such as stylistic connotations (Retsker, 1982; Baker, 1992) gained from partial translation have to be taken into consideration to cast light on idiom comprehension and recreation in translation context.

With regard to translating idiomatic expressions, translation theorists (Retsker, 1982; Baker, 1992) expounded on the process involving two fundamental consecutive steps:

(1) comprehending idiomatic expressions in source text, and

(2) recreating idiomatic expressions in target text.

This process of understanding and reproducing idiomatic expressions is generally fraught with particular problems, stemming from similarities and differences in combinatory patterns of the constituents participating in idiomatic

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expressions. At scrutiny, similarities and differences in syntactic and semantic forms can facilitate idiom comprehension, and mislead at the same time in their recreation in target text (see illustrative examples below).

Idiomatic expressions, regardless of their motivation, whether transparent, analysable, decomposable, or culture-bound, fall into the category of difficult translation problems, calling on the translator/learner to resort to equivalence and adaptation procedures as suggested by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972), and further developed by Retsker (1982) and Baker (1992). In achieving equivalence or ―same value, worth relations" between source and target texts in Pym's phrase (2010) at formal, lexical, and functional level, equivalence and adaptation as translation procedures have been put forward by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) for dealing with formulaic elements (idiomatisms, in their own terminology) in general, and idiomatic expressions in particular. As we shall see in the review of literature, equivalence is a translation technique and a linguistic concept at the same time. While Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) have set a limit on the number of translation procedures applicable to idiomatisms, Retsker (1982) and Baker (1992) employ a wider range of strategies for formulaic elements, in particular idiomatic expressions.

In dealing with phraseological units, Retsker (1982), pointed out that proverbs and sayings tend to have similar internal structure based on the common cultural heritage of some European languages.

1. Be in the seventh heaven, ―*Être au septième ciel*"

2. Play with fire, ―*Jouer avec le feu*"

3. Have (hold) a grudge against somebody ―*Avoir une dent contre quelqu'un*"

4. Put the cart before the horse, ―*Mettre la charrue devant/avant les oeufs*"

5. Not to see the wood for the trees, ―*Les arbres cachent la forêt*" (p.58).

A short analysis of the illustrative idiomatic expressions offered by Retsker (1982) points to a number of differences not to be overlooked in translation process. First, in (1) **in** heaven is translated *au ciel*; in (2) English **zero article** is rendered with the definite article *le* in French. More strikingly, example (4) diverges in the lexical elements (cart for *charrue*, horse for *bœufs*; used to conjure up image. Last, example (5) illustrates modulation translation procedure whereby a negative statement is rendered in a positive one or vice versa. As can be noted from the foregoing examples, formal equivalence, in particular, is seldom attained in translating idiomatic expressions, as the internal organisation of two languages' idiom repertoire does not generally parallel.

Similarly, the semantic range and usage frequency may differ considerably, even in case of clear formal equivalence that can be observed (Retsker, 1982; Newmark, 1988; Baker, 1992). It has been pointed out earlier that idiomatic expressions are, on the other hand, highly dependent on context for their understanding and recreating in target text. Their mismatch reflected in their formal structure and semantic range and usage frequency, according to Newmark (1988, p. 28), may be dealt with using different translation strategies (equivalent, loan translation, concretisation or footnote, or outright omission, when such an omission is not detrimental to the informative content of the text to be translated).

The general emphasis of the strategies for idioms proposed by Newmark (1988) for direct translation (L2-L1) presupposes a good knowledge of source and target language idiom repertoires. These strategies for idioms have to be put in contrast with pedagogical translation in an EF context, with EFL learners having no cultural background and limited exposure to foreign and second language idiom systems.

1.1.6   Idiomatic expressions in EFL translation

The pervasiveness of idiomatic expressions in many languages justifies amply the need for closer look at them and their use in language acquisition in general, and more specifically in translation. ―As technique for learning foreign languages", noted Newmark (1988, p.6), ―translation is a two-edged instrument: it has the special purpose of demonstrating the learner's knowledge of the foreign language, either as a form of control or to exercise his intelligence in order to develop his competence. This is its strong point in foreign-language classes, which is to be sharply distinguished from its normal use in transferring meanings and conveying messages". The pedagogical implications for translation in foreign language acquisition involve approaching translation not as a tool for controlling grammar and vocabulary, as was predominantly the case with the grammar-translation method, but as an efficient means of improving the linguistic abilities of learners.

For EFL undergraduate students, idioms are not easily recognised, isolated in translation context, in the first place. Then, they are admittedly difficult to grasp without previous exposure or hint from context contributing to their comprehension. Idiomatic expressions across English and French display significant differences in their lexical composition and syntactic behaviour; therefore, they are difficult to identify, understand, and reproduce for learners. In the language pair English-French idiomatic expressions feature various degrees of lexicogrammatical difficulties and fill not identical semantic ranges. Therefore, several translation strategies may apply forovercoming the difficulties arising from variations in word class and word order between the source-text language (English) and target-text language (French).

Despite the ubiquity of idiomatic expressions across languages and the increasing body of literature on the subject, stressing the complexities of the linguistic

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construction (Baker, 1992; Langlotz, 2006; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008), research in EFL undergraduate student idiom translation into L2 did not receive much attention in the literature. From the perspective of translation as a tool for FLA, idiomatic expressions pose two major difficulties for EFL learners at two different levels: *recognising* the source-text (FL) idiomatic expression on the one hand and *reproducing* the idiomatic expression in the target text (L2), on the other.

Difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions in the broader context of partial translation models have been highlighted by a number of authors. Vinay and Darbelnet (1972), for example, suggested resorting to equivalence and adaptation as a translation procedure in dealing with *idiomatisms* and *cultural-equivalents*, whereas Glucksberg (2001, p.87), at the end of the spectrum, acknowledged the near-untranslatability of ‒culture-specific idioms".

Difficulties in understanding and recreating idiomatic expressions, in particular, have been stressed by other translation theorists who concerned themselves with translating idiomatic expressions by translation trainees and learners (Retsker, 1982; Baker, 1992). These difficulties, they stressed in agreement, are brought about by their predominantly polysemous nature: literal and idiomatic meanings. For the most part, the equivalence and non-literal translation strategies these authors suggested for translating idiomatic expressions are applied to the broader context of direct translation (L2-L1). Finally, the recreation of idiomatic expressions, they rightly observed, in target text is not dependent only on the availability of a translation equivalent in the target language. In this respect, Baker (1992) seems in agreement with Retsker (1982) in emphasising that close attention should be given to the appropriateness of idiom translation, based on text type or register in target text.

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The translation strategies thus suggested are not tailored to meet the specific needs of EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions into their second language (French). Since idiom translation occurs in context, it will be appropriate to decompose the process of recognising/identifying, understanding, and recreating idiomatic expressions based on their occurrence in the source text (English).

It is a widely held view that idiomatic expressions represent fossilized forms of socio-cultural practices, beliefs, realities which may be hard to grasp for a learner stumbling through a foreign language. This comprehension difficulty over cultural differences is further compounded with their idiomatic, as opposed to literal, understanding, as a rule. Therefore, the translation strategies to apply to idioms and culture-bound expressions will, admittedly, be based on functional or pragmatic role in target text (L2). In other words, idiomatic expressions displaying close content and/or form can be reproduced with full conformity to target text lexicogrammatical patterns and usage constraints. Idiom comprehension in English (FL) and recreation in French (L2) involves translational transformations relating to vocabulary, grammar, and culture. Put differently, there is no straightforward full correspondence between English and French idioms even where there is close-match in lexical composition: for illustration, to lend a hand translated as *prêter main forte*.

Whilst culture-bound idioms are widely recognized to be challenging as the source domain and target domain motivating idioms may be markedly different in at least two respects: culture and development attainments; their translation, once assimilated to bridging cultural and lexical gap, is ‗always possible‗, to borrow the phrase of Newmark (1988, p. 6), who pointed to the possibility of translation, in general.

In the words of Munday (2008), the grammar-translation method brought into ‗disrepute' translation as an efficient tool for second language acquisition (SLA). However, the use of translation in language learning and teaching is increasingly emphasised by researchers (Cook, 2001; Källkvit, 2004; Carreres, 2010). For translation to become efficient aid to language learning and teaching, the specific strategies used for dealing with idiomatic expressions in EF context should gain in importance, since idiomatic expressions are common in spoken and written language. However, the link between foreign language acquisition and skills oftranslatingidiomatic expressions is often overlooked in literature.

Viewed from the perspective of raising an awareness of the difficulties that need to be overcome, translating idiomatic expressions can heighten EFL undergraduate students' awareness of their language-pair (FL-L2) similarities and differences, pushing the boundaries of their linguistic competences and general knowledge. Translation, therefore, will be no longer seen as largely a testing tool for EFL learners. By contrast, it will highlight the similarities and differences of languages, provide wide exposure to different text types that can keep learners' motivation unabated throughout language learning process.

This study is an attempt to address this research gap through exploring difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions into French (L2). It proposes strategies for enhancing skills in idiom translation. The pedagogical implications of this exploratory case study can be put to practice to improve foreign language acquisition (FLA), at large.

1.2 Background to the Study

In Mali, English is a foreign language (FL) widely taught at different education levels, starting from 7ᵗʰ form in primary school up to tertiary level in

modern languages faculties. French is the official language (L2) following the introduction of Western-type education system in the wake of French colonisation in the late 19th century. While French is the traditional medium of instruction in a country characterised by ethnic and linguistic diversity (Sanogo, 2007[4]; Skattum, 2008), its reach is limited to a narrow proportion of 10-20 percent of the adult population. According to Sanogo (2007) most estimates seem to agree that there are 36-40 native languages in the country. The native speakers of these languages are geographically spread across the eight administrative regions making up the country, with a predominance of *Bamanankan* for interlingual communication. Explaining the reason behind the limited reach of French, Skattum (2008) notes that this is accounted for by the fact that 40 percent of Malians report that *Bamanankan* is their mother tongue, while another 40 percent non-native speakers use it for interlingual communication (p.114). As can be seen from this short linguistic profile of the country, *Bamanankan* is spoken and understood by 80 percent of the population. As a consequence, the official language French (L2) is primarily used in administrative situations.

Prior to the colonial rule literacy acquisition was confined to Arabic with a few learned custodians of literacy and Islamic religion. With the advent of Western-type education, the colonial rulers sought to educate local elite, drawn from the ranks of the indigenous population, capable of carrying out secondary administrative tasks. These low-ranking office clerks might have achieved adequate degree of proficiency in French to carry out their menial administrative tasks. However, when Mali gained

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[4] PATTERNS OF FRENCH LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AMONG ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN MALI (Unpublished Dissertation Thesis)

independence from France in 1960, a dismally small proportion (7%) of the adult population was literate (Sanogo, 2007).

In 1962, the newly independent country undertook a far-reaching reform to its education system in an attempt to provide literacy for increasing numbers of its citizens, towards achieving development challenges looming large. Within the framework of the 1962 education reform, it was planned to introduce native languages into the formal education system and promote adult functional literacy. Since this benchmark reform dating back to 1962, Mali has recognised, in different waves, thirteen (13) national languages, paving the way for their use as instruction media in corresponding ethnic environments, along with French. This language policy has come to be known as *Pédagogie convergente*. Decades after its inception in 1987, there are good reasons to fully assess *Pédagogie convergente* to figure out the way forward.

In 1993, a reform was launched to the higher education system of Mali; University of Mali was then created. The newly created university brought together a number of already existing tertiary education institutions. University of Mali was scrapped some years later, and replaced with University of Bamako, in pursuance of the Presidential Decree N°05-170/P-RM dated 12 April, 2005. A decree-designated Vice-Chancellor is entrusted with university management.

All A-level graduates[5] are eligible for university admission without entrance examination. The ever growing numbers of student population compounded with inadequate university facilities and chronic shortage of lecturers is a major constraint on the education system. In 2012, the tertiary education system has undergone a

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[5]Bâcheliers, in French. For the sake of clarity and consistency, I will use the French terms ‗bâchelier' ‗DEUG 2', ‗Licence' and ‗Maîtrise', for two-year university level, three-year university level, and four-year university year, respectively.

complete overhaul. As a consequence, four new universities were created to replace University of Bamako.

The growing drive of people towards learning English to further their education, enhance their professional development and open up business opportunities makes it a valuable tool. In effect, the widespread use of English language in academia and business around the world makes it a pressing need for increasing numbers of people to have good command of this international language in a globalised world, hence the important role translation can play in interlingual and intercultural communication.

The present study was designed and carried at *Université des Langues et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako* (ULSHB), and the Modern Languages Faculty is called *Faculté des Lettres, Langues et Sciences du Langage* (FLLSH). All university subjects are taught in English as a foreign language (FL).

In accordance with language policies laid down by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, translation is taught at Faculty level as aid to foreign language learning and teaching. The subject is taught in two complementary modules called generalised translation and specialised translation, which make a combined pass mark (credit). Translation is given a major role in the curriculum, for each component module is taught two (2) hours a week, starting from the first year through to the final university year (fourth).Translation is not taught, however, as a professional training subject paving the way for a diploma or degree. In other words, translation is considered a tool for foreign language acquisition (FLA). For translation classes to significantly contribute to English language learning and teaching, and also develop the linguistic competence of undergraduate students, appropriate didactic materials and translation teaching methods are required.

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By and large, the complete absence of a translation syllabus preparing students gradually through attested translation strategies (borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, adaptation, etc.) leaves every teacher having translation classes to come up with his own translation teaching techniques and materials. This leads undoubtedly to great variation in translation assignment contents, without any objective in view other than _translate'.

Faced with this difficult situation, students have exposure to different translation materials they do not relate to and which are not intended to overcome translation problems at large, and idiom translation difficulties in particular. Learners are expected to make the grade in translating essentially from English into French (FL-L2), which is fairly achievable, since a good command of the target language (French) is essential in translating, as is equally important understanding the source text (English).

Learning the nuts and bolts of translation is essential to achieving good quality translation, for linguistic competence is called on to develop translation skills. As Newmark (1988, p.6) pointed out, translating involves working on four levels: (1) translation is first a science, (2) it is a skill, (3) translation is an art, (4) finally, translation is _a matter of taste'. These characteristics of translation highlighted by the translation-analyst (self-description) apply aptly to translation strategies for idiomatic expressions, for these will involve lexicogrammatical transformations and specific cultural adaptations for culture-bound idioms.

As pointed out by translation scholars (Catford, 1965; Cook, 2001; Munday, 2008) translation as a foreign language learning and teaching tool has been adversely affected by the grammar-translation method, which had the severe limitation of

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decontextualizing translation. The grammar-translation method, also referred to as the pedagogical translation, focused on teaching L2 based on L1.

Strategies for overcoming difficulties arising in direct translation (SL/FL-L1) of idiomatic expressions have been extensively researched (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1972; Retsker, 1982; Newmark, 1988; Baker, 1992), but little attention has been paid to the specific difficulties encountered by EFL learners in translating idiomatic expressions into second language (FL-L2). In an EFL context, idiomatic expressions pose particular difficulties in recognising and understanding in source text, and recreating the semantic relations and pragmatic use in target text (L2).

This study seeks to explore the specific causes of the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduates in translating idiomatic expressions into French (FL-L2). Exploring these problems and identifying the typical translation difficulties attributable to poor knowledge of translation strategies and inadequate knowledge of idiom repertoire in target language (French), and consequently proposing translation-enhancing strategies for overcoming the identified difficulties is thought to be of interest to learners and teachers alike. Different translation procedures valid for idiomatic expressions, such as equivalence, correspondence, loan translation, and plain translation are explored. These will considerably help students gain a better understanding of the relation between idiom translation problems and proven translation strategies, which may result in better academic achievement. In fact, if learners can approach idiomatic expressions as part of the lexicon and relate idioms to equivalents or correspondents in the target language and culture, it will be significantly easier for them to translate in a satisfactory way.

In the light of these reasons the present study is concerned with exploring difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic

expressions into French. Furthermore, the study examines strategies that can be used to enhance the skills of translating idiomatic expressions among EFL undergraduate students in Mali.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Difficulties in translating idiomatic expression raise the question of translation direction, direct translation (SL/FL to L1) as opposed to inverse translation (L1 to SL/FL). Directionality, it is noteworthy in this context, is a sure indication of the potential translation errors likely to be observed in students' translation outputs. Nesselhauf (2003) carried out a study focused on producing L2 collocations in free assignments by German students learning English. The findings obtained from her analysis point to strong interference of L1 collocational patterning on L2 collocation production. Extending the analysis of interference errors in collocation production to translation, it can be argued that direct translation (SL/FL to L1) and inverse translation (L1 to SL/FL) may point to errors falling into different categories such as noun phrase, prepositional error, verbal transitivity, set word combination of different fixedness.

It is widely accepted that a translator must translate into his native tongue or language of habitual use (Newmark, 1988; Baker, 1992). Furthermore, phraseologists and translation theorists have repeatedly emphasised that the acquisition and use of formulaic elements is much easier for native speakers. It has been noted previously that good command of formulaic elements by L2/FL learners indicates high proficiency in the language being studied. This process, however, is in permanent progress, never complete. EFL learners are clueless at times when faced with idiomatic expressions in utterances, more specifically in spoken discourse, which idioms pervade more than written language (Baker, 1992; Newmark, 1988; Kunin,

1996). These difficulties are largely accounted for by limited educational and cultural background exposure to idiomatic expressions as compared to native speakers living in a cultural setting permeated with these linguistic units. Additionally, idiomatic expressions stand out as a particularly difficult structure for linguists and language learners alike (Langlotz, 2006, p.14).

In recent years, investigations into L2 increasingly emphasise the need for formulaic language to be integrated into learning and teaching as sequences constitute a good chunk of the vocabulary in many languages (Wray, 2002, 2009; Nesselhauf, 2003, 2004; Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Granger & Meunier, 2008; Seretan, 2011). Using translation as a L2 learning tool has been emphasised in many places in literature (Retsker, 1982; Newmark, 1988; Cook, 2001; Carreres, 2010).

Translation difficulties arising in partial translation (between two specific languages) and appropriate strategies for overcoming the ineluctable difficulties have been extensively researched (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1972; Catford, 1965; Nida & Taber, 1969; Retsker, 1982; Newmark, 1988; Baker, 1992). Translation achieved as a result of recreating from Source Text (ST) to Target Text (TT) requires by necessity lexicogrammatical transformations and cultural adaptations because languages are not identical in numerous respects (grammar, vocabulary, and culture). Vinay and Darbelnet (1972), for instance, have described in detail and illustrated abundantly variations in word order and word class (transposition in their own term) resulting from lexical and grammatical differences between French and English.

In order to clarify lexicogrammatical transformations, consider the following for adverb and adjective placement and variation in word class or grammatical category.

Iranian politicians *routinely deny Israel's right to exist*, translated as:

*Les politiciens **iraniens nient régulièrement le droit d'Israël à l'existence***.

It is not difficult to see that the placement of the adverb (routinely) with regard to the verb (deny) it modifies is different from English (preceding the verb) as compared to French (following the verb). In addition, the placement of the adjective Iranian in relation to the noun it modifies is different from English (preceding the noun) from French (following the noun). Furthermore, the English collocation ***right to exist*** (noun + verb) is rendered in French with the help of a collocation ***droit à l'existence*** (noun + noun). A poor translation reproducing the source-text collocational pattern (noun + verb) would be ***le droit d'exister***.

Similarly, translational transformations that occur in dealing with idiomatic expressions have been researched by Retsker (1982) and Baker (1992) from the perspective of Russian and English, respectively. They proposed a wide range of strategies for translating idiomatic expressions from FL/SL into L1. In particular Baker (1992) emphasised four strategies. These are briefly presented as follows.

1. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form,

2. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form,

3. Translation by paraphrase,

4. Translation by omission.

Vinay and Darbelnet, (1972), Retsker (1982), and Baker (1992) targeted primarily direct translation (SL/FL into L1) and professional translation. Difficulties experienced by EFL learners in pedagogical translation into Second Language (SL) received little or no attention in their theoretical models. To my best knowledge, no investigation has been conducted focusing on EFL idiom translation difficulties into SL. The present study sought to address this knowledge gap by exploring the

difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions into French (L2).

At *Université des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako* (ULSHB), translation is part of the curriculum throughout university years, from the first year through to the final (fourth) year. However, translation out of and into English is not very popular with undergraduate students. Most of them tend to apply just enough effort to make the grade. Although translation may be highly beneficial as a language learning tool, students overlook the opportunities of acquiring general knowledge and language skills with the help of this tool. Incidentally, translation skill can come in handy at job entry, since translators can be in high demand. So it is clearly crucial to examine difficulties EFL students in Mali face in translating idiomatic expressions and find out how such skills can be improved.

1.4 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions from English into French (FL-L2). In particular, the study focused on the causes of undergraduate student underachievement in translating idiomatic expressions. The study also attempted to explore solutions to the translation problems that students experience through different stages of English language learning process. The overall objective is to examine how the skills of translating idiomatic expressions can be improved among EFL undergraduate students in Mali.

1.5 Research Questions

This study sought to explore the following research questions:

(1) What are the specific causes of EFL undergraduate student difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions? Related to this primary question are the following research sub-questions:

(2) What are the lexicogrammatical features of English idiomatic expressions in students' translation outputs?

(3) What is the effect of EFL undergraduate student underachievement in translating idiomatic expressions?

(4) What are the perceptions of EFL teachers and students concerning the type of help they both need in order to enhance the skills of translating idiomatic expressions among EFL undergraduate students?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The present research is a descriptive case study designed to explore the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions from English into French (FL-L2). The expected results obtained from this research will help enhance teaching and learning translation for EFL teachers and students. The study will be useful in driving up the interest of EFL learners in translation and significantly reduce the rate of underachievement, which can result in better job satisfaction for teachers. Incidentally, it can open up pedagogical implications for FL teaching and learning through curriculum package development, and significantly enhance undergraduate achievement and alleviate the difficulties they encounter in learning, at large. Overall, the study may provide stimulation for improving English language teaching and learning to other researchers.

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1.7 Limitations

Initially, the study was designed to draw on a corpus of students' idiom translation outputs, spanning from 2006 to 2010. Poor records keeping at the Department of English Language (*ULSHB*) made it impossible to trace back translation papers of interest to the research. Faced with this situation, the researcher settled for pre-test assignment and real-life examination scripts to compensate for the lack of corpus data. Given the complex nature of the problem under study it would be appropriate to put the research on a larger scale, including larger groups of students and lecturers on a larger time frame.

Another limitation of the study is the lack of peer review for translation sequences collected and analysed for identifying translation patterns. To alleviate these limitations and ensure validity and reliability, data collected have been triangulated by source (learners, teachers, documents) and method (questionnaire, interview, in-class observations).

1.8 Delimitations

Phraseology or formulaic language is an umbrella term that covers heterogeneous linguistic constructions such as idioms, set expressions, collocations, proverbs and sayings, similes, authorial quotations, etc. To set limits the study assigned idiomatic expressions to a narrow subcategory delineated from other types of formulaic elements. This fundamental delimitation from other formulaic sequences is based essentially on transferred meaning (metaphor and metonymy) and lexicogrammatical peculiarities featuring in idiomatic expressions. In clear terms, idiomatic expressions are mostly seen as non-literal multi-word items with morphological deficiencies, functioning as part of a sentence or clause.

The acquisition of formulaic elements, it has been stressed earlier, is never complete for EFL learners and the process is compounded by inadequate exposure to FL idiom repertoire system. Therefore, the present study is concerned with translating (FL to SL) the subcategory of idioms, for the researcher assumed that EFL undergraduate students are more advanced in SL (French).Translation difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students are broken down to two categories: lexicogrammatical difficulties faced with in translation and translation strategies valid for rendering English idiomatic expressions into target language (French).

1.9 Organisation of the Study

The present research study is structured around the following chapters.

.Chapter 1 provides an overview of the structure of the study. The chapter introduces the general theoretical problems guiding the disciplines of translation and phraseology with a particular emphasis on the terminological and definitional problems characteristic of investigation into idiomatic expressions. The importance of formulaic language in foreign language acquisition is looked at with stress on idiom translation difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students. The background to the study outlines the linguistic profile of Mali and details the role of translation as aid to foreign language teaching and learning in the country. The difficulties encountered by EFL learners in translating (FL-L2) idiomatic expressions are highlighted. The chapter presents the research problem and related research questions. The chapter ends with the delimitations of the study.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework guiding the study. This chapter brings together different linguistic perspectives on idiomatic expressions and the translation strategies used for dealing with them. The characteristic properties associated with idioms are highlighted drawing on different theoretical approaches.

The point is argued that idiom definitions offered by linguists are intralingual; and therefore, they fail to capture the stylistic dimension of idioms most apparent from translation perspective. The chapter explores the two-dimensional difficulty of idiom comprehension in source text and recreation in target language with the help of appropriate strategies. The chapter ends with a summary of insights gained from linguistic perspectives on idiom motivation, comprehension and recreation in translation.

Chapter 3 presents the research design and conduct, and the rationale for qualitative case study selection to explore the research problem: causes of the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating (FL-L2) idiomatic expressions. In addition, the chapter presents the research site, participants, and data collection procedures and instruments.

Chapter 4 is concerned with data analysis and discussion. This chapter looks at the four research questions addressed in the study. Detailed evidence collected has been utilized to answer sequentially the research questions. The chapter includes a summary of the key findings resulting from data analysis.

Chapter 5 brings the study to a close with a summary of key findings and conclusion. This chapter also includes implications resulting from the key findings of the study. Recommendations for enhancing the skills of translating idioms among EFL learners are formulated and areas of translation difficulties presenting interest are pointed out for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is first to provide an overview of the different approaches to the broad field of phraseology in relation to idiomatic expressions. It looks in detail at the different, attested, strategies for tackling idiomatic expressions. The overall presentation is thematic, organised into two main parts.

The first part is primarily concerned with defining the key features characterising the narrow subset of idiomatic expressions considered from the broader category of formulaic elements also termed more traditionally phraseological units. This part looks at idiom motivation and comprehension as seen from different linguistic perspectives. It will be shown that idiom motivation is not fully arbitrary. For example, I shall illustrate the concept of idiom motivation with the help of the following textbook idioms:

1. Pull the string

2. Glass ceiling.

These typical idioms refer to real-life actions that are reinterpreted as abstract metaphors, although retaining the possibility of literal, semantic, understanding. Idiom comprehension, dependent to a large extent on its motivation, is the most intractable difficulty encountered by EFL undergraduates with limited socio-linguistic background exposure to idiomatic expressions.

The second part is focused on translation theory and practice, with a particular emphasis laid on different translation strategies used for rendering English idiomatic expressions into French (L2). Recreating satisfactorily English idiomatic expression in target text (French) is the second difficulty highlighted in this part. Overall, idiom

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comprehension in source text (FL) and recreation in target text (L2) are the two difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions in EFL context.

In dealing with idiom comprehension and recreation my general approach will be from the theoretical stance of idiomatic expression considered as a complex functional unit of the lexicon. There are no generally accepted definitions of the concepts of phraseology in general and of idiom in particular, as noted by numerous phraseologists (Kunin, 1996; Moon, 1998; Langlotz, 2006; Granger & Meunier, 2008; Baranov & Dobrovol'vskij, 2008). Nonetheless, attempts have been made to capture the complexities of the linguistic construction. My view of idiom is derived in part from the definition of phraseologism (his terminology) offered by Gries (2008, p.35), ―Phraseologism is defined as the co-occurrence of a form or a lemma of a lexical item and one or more additional linguistic elements of various kinds which functions as one semantic unit in a clause or sentence and whose frequency of co-occurrence is larger than expected on the basis of chance."

This definition of phraseologism put forth by Gries (2008) presents the advantage of considering phraseologism as a fixed word combination with an institutionalised meaning (idiomaticity) and whose bond is not arbitrary. Although there is no set limit on the number of words participating in phraseologism, Gries (2008) asserts that the concept is viewed as a complex lexical unit, which cannot function as a full sentence. This function restriction criterion pointed out by the author categorises phraseologism in the narrow sense of the term, and entails that longer ready-made, routine, stretches of utterance such as proverbs and sayings, authorial quotations, phatic expressions, etc., which can stand alone as full sentences, are not considered as phraseologisms.

If we accept, as I do, the definition discussed above, there is, however, the need to clear one terminological confusion. In the sense of Gries (2008), the term phraseologism is broad, encompassing different types of word combination such as collocation and idiom. Phraseologism is used to denote any unit of linguistic analysis made of a set word combination that is syntactically deficient. Seen in this light, collocations and idioms fall into the category of phraseologism, and the term can be used interchangeably with phraseology, phraseme, phraseological unit, or formulaic sequence, also widely used in the literature on the subject.

The overall terminology of phraseologism is a convenient synonym for phraseology in the narrow sense of the term. At closer examination, Gries's (2008, p.35) definition seems to attach greater importance to phraseologism internal structure (form) over the meaning (semantics). The author appears to overlook figurativeness as a characteristic property of phraseologism. Integrating figurativeness (transferred meaning) provides a working definition of idiom as a fixed word combination with a partial or full transferred meaning, functioning as part of a clause or sentence.

For the sake of consistency and clarity and in accordance with common usage, I will further use interchangeably the term idiomatic expression and phraseologism as described above, to denote the unit of linguistic analysis made up of fixed word combination with a full or partial transferred meaning.

This working definition acknowledges the definition of phraseologism proposed by Gries (2008, p.35), with a significant observation, though. The term is purposefully restricted to the concept of idiomatic expression as a unit of linguistic analysis. For the researcher, it is not construed as a cover term for the broad discipline dealing with ready-made lexical strings observed in a given language word-stock. Therefore, different categories of short multi-words units such as collocations and

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compounds are not subsequently included in the term as I will further use it in this study. This is a significant difference from Gries's definition and points to the type of borderline word combinations, including compound noun and collocation, which do not fall within the scope of idiomatic expression.

The suggested translation strategies for idiomatic expressions will be closely related to procedures used for translating lexical items. I, therefore, would argue that translation strategies applicable to free, variable words and word combinations can be used in translating idiomatic expressions as the latter are viewed both as fixed, flexible elements of a given language lexicon.

Traditionally, idiomatic expressions have been defined across languages based on their syntactic behaviour, semantic features, and pragmatic functions (Moon, 1998; Langlotz, 2006; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008). For instance, Langlotz (2006) emphasises that theoretical linguists held non-compositionality and syntactic inflexibility as defining properties of idiom (p.16). This rigid model, as it has been observed in cognitive and corpus-linguistic evidence drawn from ‚real language use', fails to explain creativity and transformations in idiom use.

Furthermore, traditional linguistics considered idiom figurative meaning as a given that hardly lends itself to any rationale decomposition, analysis. This limitation was overcome, in large part, through psycholinguistics and cognitive linguistics, which assimilated idiom access and comprehension to knowledge acquisition, storage, and retrieval. To paraphrase Langlotz (2006, p.12), idiom comprehension has been accounted for by conceptual metaphor and metonymy, leaving little room to arbitrariness, non-transparency, non-decomposition.

In addition, cross-linguistic studies contributed its insights into phraseology systems across languages. The resulting understanding gained from contrastive

phraseology asymmetry in general, and idiom motivation, accounted for by source domain dissimilarities in particular, has theoretical and practical implications for translation theory and practice. Significant similarities and glaring differences across idiom repertoires put into perspective non-decomposition and non-transparency of idioms from one phraseology system to another. Put in other words, a supposedly opaque, un-analysable idiomatic expression in source language will be transparent, analysable in target language, casting light on the source language idiom in the process. From translation perspective this assumption implies that idiomatic expressions can be theoretically approached and rendered in equivalent, correspondent, literal or plain lexical items. Put differently, the lexicogrammatical features characterising idiom typology are not fully preserved in translation.

As stated earlier idioms have been defined primarily based on their semantic, syntactic features, and the pragmatic functions (Moon, 1998; Langlotz, 2006; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008) they fulfil in written or spoken utterances.

The definitions have been offered so far at intralingual level only, albeit from different theoretical perspectives such as theoretical linguistic, psycholinguistic, corpus-linguistic, cognitive-linguistic, contrastive studies, etc. Intralingual and interdisciplinary definitions, although important, since they highlight key features characterising individual idiom systems, are not sufficient in themselves. The cross-linguistic insights into idiom repertoire similarities and differences are hardly taken into consideration when defining the concept of idiom.

In effect, the pervasiveness of idioms and cross-linguistic analysis provide unique opportunities to look at idioms as language universals on par with antonyms, homonyms, tenses, etc. Therefore, translation comes into play to show to idiom comprehension in source-text language and recreation in target-text language.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Retsker (1982) developed a theory of phraseological unit translation that acknowledges the tripartite classification (phraseological fusion or idiom proper, phraseological unit, phraseological combination) of phraseologisms put forth by Vinogradov (1947), who proceeded from Russian lexicology. Retsker (1982) makes the argument to the effect that a translator must be knowledgeable of phraseology theory, but he must not concern himself with the formal structure (typology) of phraseological units when dealing with a given phraseological unit in translation context. Retsker (1982) holds the view that figurativeness, or conveyed image, is key in defining idioms. Along his line of reasoning, single-lexical items, compound nouns, collocations, *idioms proper* (phraseological fusions) can all count as idioms through transferred meaning, full or partial. This theoretical stance adopted by the author brings the figurative dimension to the fore of idiom definition from the perspective of translation. In this vein, Retsker (1982) defines idiom as a linguistic unit, simple or complex, fulfilling a stylistic function, which does not lend itself to word-for-word translation on account of figurative meaning (p.38). It is important to note that Retsker (1982) looks at transferred meaning and stylistic connotations of idioms as important features in translation.

This study relates to Retsker's concepts of stylistic function and figurativeness in relation to words and word combinations in translation. The level of understanding (literal or figurative) of single words and fixed expressions is the main difficulty arising in translation. However, stretching the concept of idiom too far to include single-words, compounds, collocations, proverbs and sayings (p.37), has the severe limitation of lumping into the same category linguistic units of different configuration on account of figurativeness or idiomatic meaning only. Figurativeness, albeit an

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important characteristic feature of idioms, is not sufficient in itself for a single-lexical word, a compound, or a collocation to fall within the category of idiom. They share in common figurativeness as a key feature without being qualified for the term idiom.

Therefore, while retaining the key concepts of stylistic markedness (pragmatic function) and figurativeness (semantic understanding) as pointed out by Retsker as primary features of the linguistic phenomenon of idiom in translation context, my approach to idiom categorisation does not include single-lexical items, compounds and collocations ascribed an idiomatic meaning. This narrower delimitation of idioms based on their internal composition (structure) has the advantage of setting clear criteria for idiom differentiation from other borderline formulaic elements.

In partial agreement with the definitions provided by Gries (2008, p.35) and Retsker (1982, p.38) idiom can be defined as a word combination with a partial or full transferred meaning, functioning as part of a clause or sentence.

Despite their ubiquity noted in many places in literature, idiom systems do not parallel across languages: an opaque, inflexible idiomatic expression in source-text language will turn out to be fairly transparent, literal, in target-text language. A view expressed by many phraseologists (Abeillé, 1995; Gibbs, 1995; Kunin, 1996; Moon, 1998; Langlotz, 2006) is that idiomatic expressions are lexicalized items whose semantic features are comparatively irregular, less so is their syntactic behaviour, which is more subject to grammar rules .

At first sight, the semantic characteristics of idioms, in particular compositionality or additive meaning of constituents and analysability or participant words leading to the figurative understanding (p.36), as explained by Langlotz (2006), may look difficult to capture. At closer look, however, the syntactic properties of idioms, fall in line with restrictions governing grammar constraints and usage rules.

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In contrast to traditional views of phraseology developed by theoretical linguists, as pointed out earlier, who considered idioms as fossilized, frozen elements of the lexicon, opaque in their meanings on account of their non-motivation, inflexible in their syntactic behaviour, new attempts have been made to approach idiomatic expressions from different theoretical perspectives such as psycholinguistic, cognitive-linguistic, corpus-based linguistic, cross-linguistic studies, etc.

These approaches to idiomatic expressions view them as not fully opaque, inflexible, un-analysable. Subsequently, idiomatic expressions came to be seen in a new light as relatively variable, analysable, flexible elements of the lexicon. Citing various authors, Abeillé (1995, p.23) illustrates the point that the semantic irregularity of idioms is stronger than the inflexibility of their syntactic behaviour: ―Wasow et al. (1983) suggested for English, and Ruwet (1983), for French, that the syntactic flexibility of an idiom may be predicted on semantic grounds: the more the idiomatic meaning can be decomposed, the more flexible the idiom is.‖

PART ONE: PHRASEOLOGY

2.1.1 The object and subject of phraseology

The term phraseology is derived from a combination of Greek words ‗phrasis‘ (phrase, expression) and ‗logos‘ (science, learning)[6]. Phraseology is a special sub-branch of linguistics which investigates the syntactic, semantic, morphologic, and pragmatic features characterising recurrent word patterns with conventionalised meanings.

From the cross-linguistic perspective on phraseology there are wide terminological discrepancies as to the very name and scope of the discipline. These terminological variations across languages resulted in abundant, conflicting, often overlapping terms reflecting, to some extent, developments in the discipline across countries.

It has been noted by phraseologists (Moon, 1998; Burger *et al*, 2007) that in Slavonic, Germanic and some Roman languages the term ***phraseology*** is generally accepted for the discipline and ***phraseological unit*** is used to refer to the subject matter, e.g. the units of linguistic analysis. This unified terminology, emphasise Burger *et al*. (2007) is accounted for by the long-established tradition of academic inquiry into the linguistic phenomenon of phraseology in these countries (p.11).

By contrast, the English-speaking world was slow to tackle the difficult problem of phraseology and, as a consequence, offers no generally accepted term used to refer to the discipline. The term phraseology, however, appears to be commonly used with other terms to denote a varied range of linguistic constructions. Widely varying terms such as polylexemic expressions, idioms, idiomatic expressions, set expressions, fixed expressions, phraseological units, phraseologisms, phraseological

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[6] Alifirenko, N. & Semeneko, N. (2009, p.6)

expressions, fixed expressions and idioms, phrasemes, etc. abound to refer to the linguistic units making up the system of phraseology. Wray and Perkins (2000, p.3), for instance, provide a table listing around fifty (50) terms used, in their own words, ―in the literature to describe formulaic language and formulaicity".

Despite these different denotations, the term phraseology appears to be predominantly used for the discipline itself, while traditionally the term idiom is used to refer to a distinct subclass of ―fixed expressions with specific semantic properties" (Everaert *et al*., 1995, p.4). To clear the terminological ground and come up with a unified term for the discipline and subject matter is a daunting task, although attempts have been made to unify the terms in use. With this purpose in mind, Burger *et al*. (2007) strongly advance the term ***phraseme*** for the unit of linguistic analysis, while retaining the term ***phraseology*** for the general area (p.xiiiff).

In French scholarly literature devoted to the subject there is no generic term for the discipline. The term ‗*phraséologie'* (phraseology), according to Burger *et al*. (2007), although widely accepted in other languages for the discipline, is often avoided since it is linguistically loaded, fraught with a strong pejorative connotation (p.11), as can be evidently seen from French dictionaries. To make clearer the point under discussion, let us consider the following dictionary entry for the word phraseology excerpted from ***Le Petit Robert de la langue française*** (2012)[7].

1. **Didact.** Ensemble des expressions (terminologie et particularités syntaxiques) propres à un usage, un milieu, une époque, un écrivain. *La phraséologie marxiste, administrative.*➡1. jargon, style. *«la phraséologie particulière aux amoureux»*

2. **Littér.** Emploi de phrases, de grands mots vides de sens.➡bavardage, verbiage. *«Rien de senti. Une phraséologie apprise par cœur, une rhétorique d'écolier»* (R. Rolland).

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[7]Version électronique

3. **Ling.**Ensemble des expressions, locutions, collocations et phrases codées dans la langue générale.

The first (1) definition refers to language norms and usage specific to a particular community in a given period of time, whereas the second (2) definition is full of derogatory overtone, which indicates why the term is not favoured. The last definition (3) encompassing expressions, idioms, collocations and formulaic phrases in common parlance is appropriate and relates to this study in so much as it reflects the terminology adopted for the general area of the discipline.

On the other hand, the unit of linguistic analysis making the subject is termed in French literature _locution', _expression figée' _expression idiomatique', _expression usuelle' or _idiomatisme[8]'.

2.1.2 A brief overview of the discipline

Dating back to the mid-nineteenth century the linguistic phenomenon of formulaic language, e.g. recurrent, routine patterns of words and phrases, has been observed and investigated by a number of researchers across different disciplines (Wray, 2002, p.7ff). Despite the pervasiveness of phraseology as evidenced in human languages, ranking it to a language universal such as homonymy, antonymy, synonymy, metaphor, tense, etc., the discipline received little systematic treatment until Ch. Bally. According to various accounts (Kunin, 1996; Burger *et al*., 2007; Seretan, 2011), Ch. Bally first devoted attention to the systematic description of word combinations. In the words of Kunin (1996), both the theory and term of phraseology have been introduced by Ch. Bally in two successive treatises ―Traité de stylistique" (1905) and _Traité de stylistique française' (1909).

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[8] Le Petit Robert de la langue française 2012. Version électronique; Le Larousse Expression. 2008. Version électronique ; Maurice Rat (1957) Dictionnaire des locutions françaises. Librairie Larousse. Paris ; Alain Rey & Sophie Chantreau (2008) Dictionnaires des locutions et expressions. 2ème Édition. Dictionnaires Le Robert.Paris

Kunin (1996) asserts that phraseology was regarded by Ch. Bally as an integral part of stylistics, as indicated by the very titles of the aforementioned treatises. From an initial typology broken down to four categories, (a) *groupements libres ou passagers'*, free combinations, associations, (b) *groupements usuels'* usual phrases, collocations, (c) *séries phraséologiques'* idioms, and (4) *unités phraséologiques'* phraseological units), in the first treatise Ch. Bally will, eventually, narrow down his classification to two categories: free combinations and phraseological units (Kunin, 1996, p.6).

Ch. Bally (as discussed in Kunin, 1996) advanced the concept of word-identificator as the primary feature of phraseological unit. Word-identificator is applied to mean that among all features characterising a phraseological unit there is predominantly one single word functionally equivalent to that phraseological unit, and which can replace it in written and spoken utterances.

Criticisms have been raised against this word-identificator view of idioms based on the dichotomy language-speech laid down by Saussure. This approach to language entailed that words, in common with phraseological units, are not motivated, but arbitrary at the root. Although instances of phraseological units carrying an equivalent meaning to single-lexical items or even word combinations can be readily found in language, it appears obvious that single-lexical words and phraseological units are distinct in a number of respects.

In the first place, the semantic range and stylistic markedness of a phraseological unit and its literal counterpart are not parallel. For example, a textbook case idiomatic expression is _Kick the bucket' used for _die'. The expression, arguably, is not frequently used, substandard; _die' on the other hand, is commonly used, stylistically unmarked, neutral.

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In addition, there is a limit on the morphological endings and semantic transformations an idiomatic expression can carry. Some illustrative idioms (taken from Glucksberg, 2001) are ‗spill the beans', ‗kick the bucket'; and ―get the sack" for being dismissed (Arnold, 1986). These instances do not allow contrast between singular and plural, as is the general rule for countable nouns. Kick the *buckets; spill the *bean; get the *sacks. In fact, number restriction in idiomatic expressions has prompted some phraseologists to strongly argue that idioms are not made up of words, but word-forms (Čermák, 2007). As a result of this observation based on inflectional restriction, Čermák (2007) makes the case for the concept of idioms to be broadened to include word-forms below and above word-level (p.20).

Finally, a single-lexical item functionally equivalent to an idiom is not restricted to a narrower set of discourse functions (pragmatics) in sentence as may be the case with its phraseological expression counterpart. This mismatch in meaning, in other words lack of correlation in affective meaning and pragmatics, has been pointed out by researchers drawing on languages as apart as Russian (Kunin, 1996), French (Abeillé, 1995), and English (Langlotz, 2006). Abeillé (1995, p.15) substantiates the point under discussion by providing the following example: *manger ses mots* (literally eat one's words, for the single-lexical item ‗mumble'. Substituting ‗mots' with ‗paroles' will disrupt the idiomatic meaning: *Manger ses paroles. The single word ‗mumble' cannot express the full idiomatic meaning.

Moreover, ‗Kick the bucket' is a typical idiomatic expression readily found in literature because it epitomizes the traditional view of idioms as semantically non-compositional, opaque (Gibbs, 1995, p.99). Against the wide spectrum of nuances and overtones in language, the idiomatic expression has a lower register in discourse, while the literal paraphrase ‗die' is neutral.

From many accounts, idiomatic expressions and their literal counterparts are not evenly distributed across languages. Nazarian (1987), in particular, has shown that only a small proportion of French idiomatic expressions have a lexical counterpart (12.5%). On the other hand, a number of French idioms have no close literal counterpart: *Coiffer sainte Catherine*, used to say ‗remain unmarried for too long‘; *faire danser l'anse du panier*; to mean ‗cheat on the shopping money by a housemaid‘; *violon d'Ingres*, for ‗artistic hobby indulged in by somebody‘ (p.17).

Moreover, where there is a literal synonym with idiomatic expression, the constructions differ in connotative range and register function. Stylistic markedness is an important feature of idiomatic expressions. This view has been expressed by Retsker (1982, p.143) in relation to translating phraseological units, i.e. idiomatic expressions falling under different categories. Retsker (1982) has noted that phraseology, given its strong expressive function in language and speech, should be approached from the perspective of stylistics. This distinguishing expressive load between idiomatic expression and literal counterpart reflects the view adopted in the present study.

Still, idiomatic expressions and their literal counterparts are closely related in semantic features as parts of the lexicon. The lexical item is, as a rule, used to decipher, paraphrase the idiomatic expression that may be hard to grasp for the listener or reader without previous exposure or real context. Despite this obvious intimate relationship between idioms and lexical words, the meanings expressed by both are not identical. There is an additional special dimension, stylistic markedness and nature-like aspect to idiomatic expressions that set them apart as indispensable in language. Compare the following idiomatic expressions with their literal counterparts.

To pull somebody's leg – to joke, deceit; Fr. *mener qn en bateau; faire marcher*.

Put one's best foot foremost – to endeavour; Fr. *faire de son mieux*.

To take for a ride – to kill; Fr. *Emmener quelqu'un faire un tour* (*zigouiller*)

Split hairs – Fr. *couper les cheveux en quatre, chicaner*.

2.1.2.1 Soviet school of phraseology

From the perspective of French stylistics Ch. Bally first outlined principles guiding further research in phraseology (Kunin, 1996; Burger *et al.*, 2007; Seretan, 2011). According to Kunin (1996), establishing phraseology as a linguistic sub-branch independent from lexicology has been called for by Polivanov, who first made salient points about the scope of the new discipline. In discussing Polivanov, Kunin (1996) further explains that Polivanov repeatedly wrote that while lexis is concerned with isolated lexical items, morphology deals with formal meanings of smaller units, syntax – formal meanings of word combinations, there is a need for a special part that would be comparable to syntax, but not focused on general types, but individual meanings of these isolated word combinations, in the same way as lexis is concerned with the lexical meanings of isolated words. ―Polivanov has pointed out that this part of linguistics should be termed phraseology or idiomaticity" (Kunin 1996, pp. 6-7; my translation from Russian).

The two basic types of phraseological units retained by Ch. Bally (free combination and phraseological units) were taken up and elaborated by V. Vinogradov (Asomova, 1963; Strässler, 1983; Kunin, 1996; Burger *et al.*, 2007; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008). While Ch. Bally based his treatises on French

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language, Vinogradov's (1947) inquiry into the field of phraseology was primarily concerned with Russian language[9].

Theoretically, Vinogradov approached idioms as lexicalized items carrying a range of functions in communication. He did not consider them as belonging to grammar. Vinogradov's findings centred on three main categories will have a far-reaching influence on further research in phraseology in both the Soviet Union and the West (Strässler, 1983; Kunin, 1996; Burger *et al*., 2007, Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008). Vinogradov (1947) contributed his theoretical perspective to the development of phraseology as a linguistic discipline through his description of the main phraseological types.

However, it is noteworthy that despite the ubiquity of idioms in spoken and written utterances, the systems of phraseology do not parallel across languages. In other words, the tripartite taxonomy laid down by Vinogradov may be symmetrical across languages. Still, the constituents of contrastive idiom types may significantly differ in terms of their internal composition. Put differently, word combinatory patterns featuring in idiomatic expressions may diverge from one language to another. In translation context, this phenomenon has been termed transposition by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972), to refer to variations in word class and word order carried out in target language. To put flesh on this important procedure in translation, let us look at the following idiomatic expressions and their translations into French.

1. Cut atmosphere with a knife (verb + direct object + prepositional complements)

   Fr. *Atmosphère très tendue* (noun + premodified adjective)

2. Close to the bone (adjective + prepositional phrase) Fr. *Blessant; osé (*Adjective*)*

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[9] ОбОсновныхТипахФразеологическихЕдиницвРусскомЯзыке' (inRussian)- Fundamental Types of Russian Phraseological Units.

As is the case with single-lexical items which segment reality differently (Jakobson, 1958/2004), idiomatic expressions are organized, structured grammatically and semantically in different ways from one language to another. This observation holds most true when applied to contrastive analysis of idiom motivation and imagery. Consider the following idiomatic expressions with regard to their strikingly different image-bearing elements:

Put the cart before the horse; Fr. *Mettre la charrue devant/avant les boeufs.*

Vinogradov (1947) provided the following classification of phraseological units based on the degree of semantic fusion of the constituent components.

1. **Phraseological fusion** (idiom proper). This is a subset of word combinations whose overall meaning is not amenable to the meanings of its constituent parts, nor are their individual component parts conducive to an understanding of the idiomatic meaning as a whole. In other words, the meanings of such fusions are **fully unmotivated**. At syntactic and semantic level, they are functionally equivalent to single words. They generally tend to denote, depict, or refer to situations, practices, traditional beliefs, or culture entities, ‚realities' fallen in oblivion.

To exemplify this subset of idiomatic expressions examples are taken from Russian, English, and French.

1. ‚*Бить баклуши'* = to twiddle one's thumbs = ‚*se tourner les pouces'*

2. ‚*Приехать в Тулу со своим самоваром'* = Bring/carry charcoal to Newcastle = ‚*Apporter de l'eau à larivière'*.

3. ‚*Датьвдуб'* = kick the bucket = ‚*endosser la redingote en sapin*; *dévisser son billard* ; *casser sa pipe'*

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In French and Russian equivalent idioms, the culture-bound tree names used in making coffin are worth noting: *Дуб'* (dub; oak in English) and *sapin'* (fir) in English. Incidentally, in French *sapin'* is frequently used in conjunction with *death'*.

4. *Купитькотавмешке'* = Buy a cat in a poke (bag) = *Acheter chat en poche (ou en sac)*[10]. As expressed in different languages in similar literal words, it can be argued that we witness here a loan translation from the common stock Latin as a source field for idioms in the wider context of Europe cultural heritage. This view of source domain giving birth to idiomatic expressions can be contrasted with a similar proverb documented in Bété, a dialect spoken in Côte d'Ivoire: ―The rat is not bought in a sack" (Zouogbo cited from Burger *et al*., 2007, p. 595). Calque or transference as a linguistic phenomenon, through French, could account for the Bété equivalent idiom. In actual fact, *rat* might be used to substitute for pig, to add *local flavour* to the idiom under discussion.

2. **Phraseological *Unit***. This combination is characterised by a relatively independent meaning of its constituent elements. Their constitution in two words allows partial replacement of one part by another word, keeping the meaning unchanged. Their idiomaticity is derived not from their literal meaning, but their **figurative, metaphoric** meaning. These combinations are **partially motivated**.

1. *Держать (или иметь) камень за пазухой'* = to hold (or bear, have) grudge = *tenir* (*ou garder*) *rancune'*.

2. *Носить шоры'* = Be (run) in blinkers = *avoir*, *porter des œillères'*

3. Take (grab, seize) the bull by the horns = *prendre* (*saisir*) *le taureau par les cornes'*

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[10]Rat (1957) explains that zero article preceding the nouns *chat'* and *poche'* shows that this idiom goes back deep in time.

3. ***Phraseological combination***. This category is characterised by a freer constitution of its components and derives its meanings from the understanding of its parts. The compositionality of these is restricted by constraints of usage, dictated typically by the collocationality of the components. These word combinations are **fully motivated**. In present-day terminology they can be easily assimilated to collocations as defined by Nesselhauf (2003) and Seretan (2011), i.e. semantically transparent recurrent word patterns.

The typological classification laid down by Vinogradov had a far-reaching influence on Soviet tradition of inquiry into phraseology, which evolved within the scope of Russian lexicology. According to various phraseologists (Strässler, 1983; Kunin, 1996; Burger *et al*., 2007; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008), this classification was further developed by generations of Soviet researchers. It has been pointed out that some Western phraseology theorists built their models on the classification advanced by Vinogradov (Kunin, 1996; Burger *et al*., 2007), given that phraseology as a subject of scientific inquiry was slow to strike roots in the West. It can be argued that this obvious lack of interest in the field of phraseology in the West was accounted for by the complex nature of the subject and the linguistic frameworks underpinning research into phraseology. Linguistic models that held sway in the West paid no or little attention to phraseologisms. Langlotz (2006), for example, argues that these theoretical linguistic models approached phraseology with circumspection, confined it to the periphery of their academic research (p.6).

According to Burger *et al*. (2007), the tripartite classification proposed by Vinogradov continues to be the dominant typological classification with slight variations (p.13). In spite of the widespread use of the classification established by

Vinogradov, various authors have pointed out the lack of consistency and clear delineation in his division. Strässler (1983) acknowledged that he was at pains understanding the real meaning of _motivatedness' (p.22), at the core of Vinogradov's division. He found this defining feature arbitrary, not self-evident, because a test conducted among native English speakers could not conclusively support the overriding importance of motivatedness in idioms.

In theoretical-linguistic approach to idioms, motivatedness is seen as the impossibility to derive the meaning of the whole unit from its components, either in total or from a dominant, key-element participating in the idiomatic expression. The whole obtained meaning is idiomatic, opaque, or metaphorical. The combination does not lend easily to decomposition of its parts, and generally originates from beliefs, practices, mores, and experiences that underwent changes in the course of time or fell into oblivion. As a result, the idiomatic expression becomes difficult to grasp as the shift in the very semantic and morphological structure of words constituting the whole expression may change beyond recognition. (cf. *Fier comme un pou,* proud as a peacock*).*

So far, idiomatic expression has been examined at intralingual level only. This approach has the severe limitation of overlooking idiom internal structure and motivation across languages: particular categories of word combinations are structured differently and their meanings are conveyed through different images. Accordingly, an admittedly opaque, non-motivated idiomatic expression will be seen as fully transparent and motivated in target-text language. (cf. proud as a peacock, fully transparent; and *Fier comme un pou,* calling for etymological interpretation to grasp the meaning*).*

Traditionally, non-motivation was held as the primary feature of *idiom proper*, e.g. the first type termed by Vinogradov as phraseological fusion. Using the notions of conceptual metaphor (transfer of meaning) and metonymy (extended meaning) cognitive linguists have challenged this feature of idioms, to make the point that the seemingly non-motivated idioms are syntactically and semantically more flexible than previously admitted. According to Strässler (1983) and Langlotz (2006) communication context can help decipher such ‗fossilized expressions'. Contextualization makes them less opaque, more transparent, adding them more flexibility than their isolated dictionary entry would predict.

A case in point is the English idiom, to *buy a pig in a poke* (originally 'let the cat out of the bag'. In the words of Bhalla (2009, p.23) this idiom meant ―avoiding the common fraud in 16th-century markets of selling a cheap substitute—a cat hidden in a bag, instead of a pricier piglet". The appropriateness of the explanation provided by the author is supported by similar expressions in the following language combination. For example, in Russian there is an equivalent idiomatic expression 'Купить кота в мешке', [literally, buy a cat in a bag] which translates into French *'acheter chat en poche (ou en sac)'*. Semantically, all phraseological expressions convey the meaning of gross deceit. Lexically, they use similar items to denote the same objects: cat-‗кот-chat', bag (originally poke)[11]- ‗мешок- poche (ou sac)'. In the French expression the word ‗poche' dates back earlier than ‗sac', which, according to Rey & Chantreau (2008, p.153), came to be preferred over ‗sac' in avoidance of the repeated sibilant sound /ch/ in chat and poche.

It is Vinogradov (1947) who pioneered a systematic, typological description of phraseological units or phraseologisms. From the perspective of Russian language the

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[11] ‗In the past, people were occasionally tricked into buying a poke [= a bag]with what they thought was a piglet inside, when in fact it was a cat'. (A Guide to Idioms, 2000, p.135)

main three categories of his system are largely acknowledged, with variations contributed by successive generations of phraseologists. The question remains as to the validity of their indiscriminate transferability to other languages, and English language in particular.

From the perspective of cross-linguistic phraseology Vinogradov's classification remains relevant today (Retsker, 1982; Burger *et al*., 2007). To varying extent, phraseology is used in all known human languages. This evident pervasiveness, ubiquity, repeatedly noted in literature must not, however, obscure the important fact that the lexical, syntactic and register patterns of phraseology systems in different languages are not symmetrical. This asymmetry is closely related to translating idiomatic expressions as it points out possible strategies for rendering them.

Fully aware of the considerable differences between idiom repertoires across languages, Baker (1992) has suggested four basic strategies for idioms and fixed expressions (similar meaning and similar form, similar meaning but dissimilar form, paraphrase/literal translation, omission). These strategies are not exhaustive in dealing with idioms, but they are very reflective of similarities and differences observed in contrastive idiom systems.

Developments in phraseology research were uneven and disparate across countries. Various accounts (Strässler, 1983; Burger *et al*., 2007, Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008) traced back the emergence of the discipline to the classification of phraseological units put forth by Vinogradov in the 1940s. By contrast, the discipline was relegated to the sidelines of linguistic theoretical models propounded in the West (Wray, 2002; Langlotz, 2006). In the 1970s, according to Baranov and Dobrovol'skij (2008), there will be a shift in interest from typology-oriented

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investigations into phraseology towards studies focused on syntactic behaviour, semantic characteristics, pragmatic features, and psycholinguistic processing of idioms (p18). Dating from this benchmark in the West scholars from across different linguistic perspectives will pay closer attention to the complexities of the phenomenon of phraseology.

2.1.2.2 Growing interest in phraseology in the West

Alternative accounts date back the turning point in phraseology to the late 1970s and early 1980s (Burger *et al*., 2007; Pawley, 2008; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008), with new disciplines approaching the phenomenon of phraseology from their different perspectives. As noted earlier, developments in phraseology in the West should be contrasted with the strong tradition of inquiry in the field of phraseology in the East, up to the 1970s (Strässler, 1983; Moon, 1998; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008). Building on the theory of phraseological units advanced by Ch. Bally in the early twentieth century, Vinogradov (1947) set forth a tripartite descriptive classification of phraseological units which, in the view of Burger *et al*. (2007), continues to be the dominant taxonomy up to the present day (p.13).

In the West the growing interest in phraseology is largely determined by new theoretical perspectives undertaking investigations into phraseology, following the failure of theoretical linguistics to account satisfactorily for anomalous, ill-formed word combinations in the lexicon. Many phraseologists (Wray, 2002, 2009; Langlotz, 2006; Boers & Lindstromberg, 2008) have noted that irregular, ill-formed linguistic units began to be paid closer attention, from a marginal, peripheral subject of inquiry sidelined by dominant linguistic approaches drawing on structuralism-oriented theories which gave primacy to grammar (syntax) over the lexicon.

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This ‗increased interest in phraseology', in the phrase of Gries (2008), is largely accounted for by various disciplines which started to take a fresh look at phraseology. Gries (2008) noted that the discipline waxed in importance starting from the 1970s, culminating in the 1990s. From this turning point, researchers involved in phraseology will, implicitly or explicitly, approach the subject from their theoretical backgrounds. In the course of time linguistic-oriented models, psycholinguistic approaches, cognitive-linguistic experiments, corpus-data analysis, and cross-linguistic analysis will take a closer look at recurrent word combinations. This will lead to a wide variety of typological classifications attempting to capture heterogeneous, complex, aspects of phraseology as a general linguistic area. Pluridisciplinary investigations to capture characteristic features of the complex formulaic elements will result in atomization of the unit of analysis from across linguistic perspectives.

2.1.3 The scope of the discipline

2.1.3.1 The broad and narrow sense of phraseology

The broad view of phraseology covers typologically different word combinations, which makes the task of differentiating between these ready-made expressions of language all the more relevant. On the one hand, the wide variety of word combinations does not lend easily to a clear-cut definition that encompasses all the complex aspects and types of phraseology. Differentiating between these word combinations on structural grounds (internal organisation, syntactic behaviour) is often problematic as multi-word constitution, widely held to be a key defining, albeit not sufficient in itself, property of phraseological expressions is shared by collocations, compound nouns, proverbs and sayings, clichés, similes, authorial quotations.

Furthermore, the semantic transfer of meaning or figurativeness is not limited to idiomatic expressions. This feature is equally shared by some compound nouns, (arguably, some single-lexical items), leading researchers to refer to them as ‗darkened', idiomatic compounds. Illustrative idiomatic compounds include red tape, glass ceiling, ice-breaker, brainwash, and bluestocking. It is noteworthy that all the above examples can fit into the categories of conceptual metaphor (through comparison) and metonymic metaphor, with regard to the image they call to mind, that is a constituent part is used to denote the whole.

In the broad sense, phraseology covers a wide range of linguistic constructions such as collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms, fixed expressions, proverbs and sayings, similes, greetings, authorial quotations, etc. The broad view of phraseology is widely held by linguists across perspectives in the West.

In the narrow sense, however, phraseology does not include sentence-like or clause-like set expressions such as proverbs and sayings, authorial quotations, clichés and similes (e.g. comparisons using *like* or *as*). These linguistics units, as a rule, can function independently as whole well-formed sentences. This narrow sense is traditionally characteristic of Soviet-Russian school of phraseology, which maintains that full, stand-alone routine formulas such as proverbs and sayings are best served in paremiology, the scientific study of proverbs and sayings.

2.1.3. 2 Phraseology in the sense of this research study

Following many recent studies favouring the term formulaic language or sequences (Wray, 2002, 2009; Gries, 2008; Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Seretan, 2011) over phraseology, I will further use interchangeably in this research the term formulaic sequences or elements to refer to the wide range of recurrent patterns of the lexicon in the broad sense (collocations, compounds, idioms, routine formula such as

greetings, proverbs and sayings, clichés, authorial quotations, similes, etc.), and the term idiomatic expressions or phraseologism in Gries's definition will be reserved to denote the narrow subcategory of formulaic elements traditionally referred to as idioms. Earlier, phraseologism has been defined by Gries (2008) as recurrent word patterns functioning as parts of a sentence or clause (p.33). The term phraseologism is consistently applied here and favoured over other alternate terms such as phrasemes, lexical bundles, etc.

In the sense of this study, phraseology will be used in its narrow sense, restricted to multi-word combinations assigned a special meaning. This differentiation entails one fundamental implication. Sentence-like and clause-like linguistic constructions such as proverbs and sayings, authorial quotations, slogans, clichés, and similes fall short of being included in phraseology on structural and semantic grounds.

Compound nouns and collocations make up a sizeable proportion of English word-stock. In addition, they share multi-word composition and figurativeness with idioms, at large. However, their degree of semantic fusion and structural fixedness is not on par with idioms. They are comparatively more transparent and flexible at semantic and structural level. Some compounds and collocations may share features with idioms, e.g. multi-word internal structure, idiomatic meaning, institutionalisation. In actual fact, these shared properties do not characterise compounds and collocations, by and large. With regard to their syntactic flexibility and semantic transparency, it is appropriate to set them apart from *pure idioms*.

Criteria for delimiting idioms from other elements of formulaic language such as compounds and collocations will be set up in dedicated sections in the course of the present study. In addition, conflicting and overlapping terms with regard to the linguistic constructions can be avoided using formulaic language or sequences to refer

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to all categories in their complexity, and phraseologism or idiom to denote ‚pure idiom'.

2.1.4 Defining phraseology

Although the field of phraseology has been intensively researched from multidisciplinary perspectives (Moon, 1998; Granger & Meunier, 2008; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008), there seems to be little contact between researchers. This isolation of research focus resulting from pluridisciplinary approaches to phraseology has been widely acknowledged (Kunin, 1996; Moon, 1998; Nesselhauf 2003, 2004; Langlotz, 2006; Skandera, 2008). Gries (2008), for example, laments the lack of generally accepted defining parameters of collocations and idioms among scholars (p.4), despite the increasing interest in phraseology in linguistic research. Gries (2008) points out that attempts have been made by scholars to define these constructions based on different, often, conflicting criteria.

Thus, proceeding from different perspectives phraseologists have attempted to capture the key characteristics, complexities of phraseology, using overlapping, often the same terms for heterogeneous linguistic constructions. Irrespective of the terminological confusion reflective of theoretical differences across approaches, definitions with regard to the types of phraseological units or formulaic sequences draw on a number of properties. The following definitions describing the types of phraseological units of formulaic sequences draw on syntactic behaviour, semantic features, and pragmatic use. These defining characteristics hardly take into consideration the stylistic function of the unit of analysis (phraseologisms), although the expressiveness and emotional load of idioms is often used as defining feature in translation context (Retsker, 1982).

In the words of Seretan (2011, p.2), ‑phraseological units cover a wide range of phenomena, including compound nouns (*dead end*), phrasal verbs (*to ask*

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out), idioms (*to lend somebody a hand*), and collocations (*sharp contrast, daunting task, widely available, to meet a requirement.''*

This definition of phraseological units proposed by Seretan (2011) accords in scope with the term formulaic language used by Conklin & Schmitt (2008) and Wray (2009), to denote the same linguistic constructions described by Wray (2002, p.9) as:

> a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar.

The definition offered by Seretan (2011) draws on a set of types of phraseological units or formulaic sequences. While she proceeds to list the linguistic units covered by the umbrella term *phraseological unit* without providing a clear delineation of these separate units, the definition put forward by Wray (2002) is focused on their storage, access, and retrieval in the mental lexicon. Thus, the definition the latter phraseologist provided is more to do with idiomatic expressions, seen, arguably, as a complex semantic unit. The above definitions describing the types of phraseological units or formulaic sequences draw on a number of properties for classification based on syntax, semantics, and morphology. However, phraseology has been approached from another perspective, with the aim to stressing its use in context, fed largely by corpus data.

While the definition of phraseological unit and formulaic element offered by Seretan (2011) and Wray (2002) are broad, encompassing different units of analysis including collocation and idiom, Moon (1998) approaches phraseology from corpus-data analysis of idioms. This marks a new development in the investigation into phraseology since it takes a fresh look at idioms in relating them to their pragmatics. The focus of Moon's analysis is explicitly put on idioms. Moon (1998) argues against the dominance of semantic-driven linguistics in idiom definition and classification (p.2); by contrast, she suggests that closer attention be paid to semantic variability and syntactic

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flexibility in word combinations, as opposed to theoretical linguistics with its overarching focus on the non-compositionality of idioms. This shift towards a context-based view of idiom is clearly aimed at accounting for flexibility and transformation in idioms, which were long ignored in theoretical linguistics.

The question raised by Moon (1998) can be restated as follows: semantic approach to idioms fails to explain variability, although observable, in the use language speakers make of idioms in their interaction. In Moon's view, the term fixed expressions and idioms (an idiosyncratic expression similar to idioms and fixed expressions to be found in Baker (1992) should be construed to include frozen collocations, grammatically ill-formed collocations, proverbs, routine formulae, sayings, similes, and idioms (p.2).

Although acknowledging compound nouns, adjectives, phrasal verbs, foreign phrases, and multi-word inflectional forms (such as had been lying, and more careful(ly) as an integral part of fixed expressions and idioms, the author confines the scope of her corpus-based analysis to fixed expressions and idioms, for want of better terms. It is important to note that in dealing with the broad field of phraseology, many researchers appear to be mostly concerned with idioms in the first place. Moon (1998) is a case in point.

Moon (1998, p.20) contends that the growing interest in phraseology is due in part to corpus-based research _which has demonstrated the key role of phraseology' in spoken and written language. With the study of phraseology taking a new turn, shifting towards encompassing multi-word units with more ‗syntactic variability and semantic compositionality" (p. 20), than the traditional approach would allow, focused only on _the most fixed and opaque' idioms, now there is an array of defining criteria for idioms.

After reviewing existing criteria used by phraseologists for delimiting phraseologisms, Gries (2008, p.35) put forth his own definition:

phraseologism is defined as the co-occurrence of a form or a lemma of a lexical item and one or more additional linguistic elements of various kinds which functions as one semantic unit in a clause or sentence and whose frequency of co-occurrence is larger than expected on the basis of chance.

For Gries (2008), any definition of the concept should include at least six clear-cut parameters. These are outlined as follows:

i. the *nature* of the elements involved in a phraseologism;

ii. the *number* of elements involved in a phraseologism;

iii. the *number of times* an expression must be observed before it counts as a phraseologism;

iv. the permissible *distance* between the elements involved in a phraseologism;

v. the degree of *lexical and syntactic flexibility* of the elements involved;

vi. the role that *semantic unity* and *semantic non-compositionality / non-predictability* play in the definition.

In the light of these six parameters, increased stress is put on the grammatical category of words participating in the phraseologism. Same-category or different-category unit combinations will be subsequently termed and approached differently. For instance, (1) collocation and (2) colligation are close terms to be distinguished between by the dominant word in their constitution:

1. severe limitation (collocation, lexical word (adj) + lexical word (noun);

2. not surprising (colligation, function word (particle) + dependent gerund).

The number of words participating in a phraseologism, it has been noted previously, is not set; although it is not extended to function as a stand-alone sentence

or clause. The linguistic construction is considered as part, not whole, and should be incorporated into a full sentence.

Institutionalisation is another important parameter highlighted by Gries (2008) in defining phraseologism; or, to put in another way, to what extent a given phraseologism has got the seal of approval by language users. While the first two parameters (nature and number of constituents) selected by Gries (2008) can be described as structurally-oriented, the third (institutionalisation) criterion for selection is related to language in use, insofar that the word combination to count as phraseologism should gain wide currency in language community. The parameter (iv) based on the proximity or affinity of elements participating in a phraseologism brings us to the statistical approach as opposed to the phraseological approach to the linguistic construction. This contiguity parameter reinforces the wholeness of the combination. The flexibility (v) parameter at syntactic and semantic level is a recurrent debate dividing scholars. It has been emphasised by Abeillé (1995) that there is a close relationship between the lexical variation of constituents and their syntactic behaviour. According to Abeillé (1995), the more compositional, transparent, the whole unit, the less rigid its syntactic behaviour (p.23); thus, it is more subject to rules governing language.

Traditionally, semantic wholeness and additive total of components (vi) were assumed to be key features characterising so-called pure idioms. Gries (2008) indicates it as one parameter, not assigned a paramount importance on his six-parameter scale. By contrast, he seems to suggest that there is no hierarchical importance linking these parameters. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to argue that they (i-vi) represent a combination of criteria for delineating phraseologisms as a

variety of units of analysis, ranging from collocation to idiom, with intermediary levels of word combination patterns in the middle.

My discussion of phraseologism as linguistic unit of analysis will focus on idioms also termed idiomatic expressions when reference is not made to any peculiar terms used by individual authors. Delimiting the scope of linguistic units in the general area of phraseology was important for the purposes of this study as criteria for idiomatic expression delimitation are then set to differentiate between constituent elements of formulaic language. As a result of this forthcoming delineation, the debatable, borderline cases of collocations, compound nouns (written solid, hyphenated, or separately), proverbs and sayings, clichés, authorial quotations, similes, which all share salient features with idiomatic expressions, will be set apart from them. Criteria for idiom inclusion or exclusion will take into consideration features highlighted through theoretical linguistics, cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics, contrastive phraseology studies, and translation perspective.

2.1.5 Defining the concept of idiom

As with the general area of phraseology or formulaic language characterised with varying definitions and subject matters, there is no generally agreed-on definition of the concept of idiom. The concept has been defined from different theoretical perspectives. Despite this predominant definitional variation, the definitions offered, according to Baranov and Dobrovol'skij (2008), can be subsumed to three characteristic features: ***multi-word structure***, ***frozenness***, and ***idiomaticity*** (p.28).

Baranov and Dobrovol'skij (2008) explain that different definitions purporting to provide a unified explanation of the linguistic phenomenon do not ―capture‖ well the wide range of idioms; therefore, the authors stress the need to question the properties featuring in the definitions provided by phraseologists.

1. Baranov and Dobrovol'skij (2008) hold the view that the criterion of *multi-word constitution* is, among the three highlighted parameters, less controversial; though, they acknowledge that there are problems stemming from orthographic tradition, the ways words are separated across languages.

2. The category of *frozenness* is less clear-cut than the category of multi-word structure; and

3. *idiomaticity* is more open to debate.

There is great temptation to confuse idiomaticity with fluency, conformity to language norms in usage. However, idiomaticity should be understood in different ways. In the sense of Baranov and Dobrovol'skij (2008), idiomaticity is a core defining category of idiom; therefore, the concept will be looked at closely (p.29).

a. Idiomaticity in utterance often entails *higher syntactic simplicity* resulting in greater *semantic load of individual components* in the utterance.

b. Idiomaticity is widely resorted to in *indirect speech* for filling pragmatic functions: where there is more to utterances than can be predicted on the face of words.

c. Idiomaticity involves: implicitness, presupposition, consequence, implicature, hints, allusions, etc.

Baranov and Dobrovol'skij (2008) point out that none of the three salient characteristics (multi-word structure, frozenness, idiomaticity) is sufficient in itself to describe a word or word combination as an idiom. They argue that these properties feature to different extent in combination in the wide heterogeneous types of idioms.

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There is profound disagreement between phraseologists regarding the definition and key features of idioms. For example, the primary property highlighted by Baranov and Dobrovol'skij (2008), the multi-word structure, has been repeatedly called into question in corpus-based linguistics and cross-linguistic studies (Moon 1998, Čermák, 2007). In particular Čermák (2007) emphasises that the traditional multi-word view of idiom is ‗Europocentric' (p.20), originating from unbalanced importance attached to analytical languages, which draw heavily on compounding in word-group formation. Čermák (2007) further notes that the multi-word approach does not give due consideration to predominantly synthetic languages such as Czech, Slovak or Russian, with large abundance of word-forms. Therefore, he suggests broadening idiom defining features to include below and above word-level components such as morphemes, clauses, and sentences. At close look, multi-word internal constitution may not be sufficient for a word combination to be qualified for idiom: without semantic unity, ‗stability' many ‗_idioms'_ fall short of belonging to the category.

Failing to develop a comprehensive classification that includes the widely complex, heterogeneous linguistic combinations, some phraseologists have set out, working from different theoretical frameworks, a set of key defining properties such as syntactic relations, semantic stability, and pragmatics. These perspectives attempt at categorising different facets of word combinations, which resulted in broadening up the scope of phraseology to include findings from a range of disciplines.

2.1.6 Approaches to idioms

This section aims at looking at idioms in relation to major linguistic approaches: theoretical, psycholinguistic, cognitive-linguistic, corpus-based, and cross-linguistic. Further delimitation of idioms will be brought forth in the light of key

properties stressed on by these perspectives. Defining the term idiom is important as it helps pinpoint the object of the present study. In addition, clear definition can contribute to avoiding possible confusions with other borderline cases of formulaic elements such as collocations and compounds. Unfortunately, as noted by numerous phraseologists, the criteria used by linguists to identify and classify idioms are not generally accepted in research (Langlotz, 2006; Gries, 2008; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008).

The following is an overview of different approaches to phraseology with a focus on idioms. It makes no pretence at exhaustiveness of coverage, aimed mainly at highlighting the different aspects of idioms investigated in various theoretical frameworks. In fact, the complexities of idioms led researchers to capture its different aspects (Granger & Meunier, 2008; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008). Granger and Meunier (2008) noted that findings from different disciplines are put to practical use by scholars in foreign language teaching, linguistic models, and natural language processing (p. xix). Phraseology, although increasingly researched, is still challenging for linguists attempting to build theoretical models encompassing its complexity, and learners stumbling through a foreign language.

In line with the research problem, identifying the causes of difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating (FL-L2) idiomatic expressions, stress will be laid on idiom motivation and consequent comprehension throughout this first section concerned with idioms in different approaches to phraseology. Phraseology and idioms appear intertwined and the latter is commonly used to approach the former.

As with the broad discipline of phraseology that offers no clear-cut definition and scope (Gries, 2008; Granger & Meunier, 2008; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008;

Seretan, 2011) the concept of idiom is fuzzy across linguistic models. In the following review of approaches to phraseology, it is worth stating on the onset that emphasis is put on the subcategory of idiom as it is unequivocally seen as part of phraseology in the broad and narrow sense of this term. To assign idiom to a distinct subcategory, borderlines are drawn between the concept and other elements of formulaic language including collocation and compound.

2.1.6.1 Theoretical linguistic approach

The representatives of this approach (Firth, Chafe, Fraser, Chomsky, Katz, Weinreich), according to Gibbs (1995) and Langlotz (2006), also referred to as traditional in the literature, viewed idioms in relation to the primacy of structure (grammar) over the lexicon as ill-formed, anomalous, recurrent patterns of word combinations. Dominant theoretical linguistic frameworks (e.g. generative grammar) did not pay close attention to ―the exceptions confirming the rule". According to phraseologists (Gibbs, 1995; Langlotz, 2006) the main claim of the traditional approach to phraseology is that idioms are non-compositional; that is, they are a combination of words with a specific meaning not deducible from the sum of their constituents. This view holds that idioms, in particular so-called pure idioms such as *kick the bucket, trip the light fantastic, blow the gaff* (Gibbs, 1995) are non-motivated, non-decomposable, un-analysable.

While acknowledging that some idioms, ―for some obscure historical reason (Gibbs, 1995, p.99) exemplify the traditional view that idioms' meaning is not amenable to the sum of their component words, Gibbs (1995) draws attention to ―false generalizations' based on singled out examples such as above listed. Gibbs (1995) argues that idioms display a wide variety of linguistic constructions not amenable to one category of pure idioms, where idioms appeared as fully non-motivated linguistic

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constructions, leaving the listener or learner clueless without previous exposure or hint contributed by communication context.

The view holding that idioms are fully non-motivated has been strongly challenged in the frame of new approaches (corpus linguistics and cognitive linguistics) to the phenomenon of phraseology, for it fails to capture the heterogeneous, complex aspects of idiom structure and use in language. In actual fact, it has been noted (Gibbs, 1995; Glucksberg, 2001) that most idioms are analysable, not fossilized chunks or ―dead metaphors" in the phrase of Glucksberg. A growing body of knowledge supports the view that numerous idioms are shaped by metaphor and draw their overall figurative meanings from their individual words. Gibbs (1995), for instance, illustrates idiom analysability with the help of the following examples.

1. Spill the beans, is analysable because language users know that beans is used for idea or secret and spilling denotes the act of letting out the secret.

2. Pop the question, is analysable with the understanding that question is used to mean marriage proposal and pop is used to mean utter.

3. Blow your stack, is analysable as it refers to ‗suddenly releasing or expressing internal pressure from the human mind/body" (p.100).

An important feature of idioms often overlooked by traditional linguists, but closely related to idiom motivation and transformation, is the degree to which they are compositional and capable of transformation. In similar line of reasoning with Abeillé (1995), Gibbs (1995) makes the point that there is strong correlation between idiom compositionality and idiom syntactic and semantic flexibility (p.100). For example, (1) *leave no legal stone unturned*, (2) *he pulled a string or two to help you get the job* (ibid.).

Another criticism against the traditional view of idioms concerned the ability of speakers to understand idioms they encounter for the first time. As has been rightly noted by Gibbs (1995), were idioms fully opaque, non-motivated, their understanding would be virtually impossible for even native speakers (p.100). In the same vein, their learning and production by second or foreign language learners would be almost unachievable.

As previously indicated, the traditional view of idiom was framed by linguistic models which consider the lexicon as secondary to grammar (Wray, 2002; Burger *et al*., 2007). The ‗increased interest‗ in phraseology will begin with the growing awareness that structure-oriented approaches to language overlooked and failed to explain irregular word-groups strongly present in the lexicon. According to Boers and Lindstromberg (2008), a growing body of evidence that significant proportion of language is made of building-blocks, ready-made elements, will eventually bring the traditional theoretical linguists to reconsider their view of the lexicon, striking more balanced relationships between syntax and the lexicon (p.7).

The traditional theoretical linguistic view of idiom as semantically non-compositional, opaque, has been called into question by psycholinguistic and cognitive approaches. Following Gibbs (1995), who proceeded from a cognitive-linguistic perspective, in recognising that a certain degree of semantic non-motivation exists in so-called pure idioms such as ‗*kick the bucket, trip the light fantastic, and blow the gaff"*, the psycholinguists Boers and Frank (2008, p.17) argue that ―motivation permeates the lexicon"

In turn, cognitive-linguistic analysis will focus equally on the motivation and flexibility of idioms long ignored in the theoretical linguistic approach. Idiom variability is derived from the assumption that linguistic phenomena reflect general

knowledge processes. Linguistic forms, accordingly, are motivated by language users' experience of the material and spiritual world surrounding them. In this sense, motivation understood as transferred meaning is to be established at two separate levels: metaphorical and metonymic. Metaphorical motivation is the process of transferring the meaning through comparison (conceptual metaphor), while metonymical motivation (metonymy) is the process defined by Lakoff and Johnsen (2003, p.36) whereby the speaker is ―using one entity to refer to another that is related to it". Illustrative examples given by Gibbs are as follows (1995, p.111):

1. **Metonymy**

   a. ***Object used for user***. The buses are on strike.

   b. ***Controller for controlled***. Nixon bombed Hanoi

   c. ***Place for the event***. Wall Street is in a panic.

2. **Metaphor**.

   a) Bite the dust used for die.

   b) Throw in the towel used for give up.

   c) Pass the buck, meaning to ignore one's responsibility.

   d) Kick the bucket used for die.

Gibbs (1995) makes the point that metaphor and metonymy feature together in idiomatic expressions. Idiom motivation has been an unsolved debate mooted in the traditional view of idioms tracing back to Vinogradov's classification of phraseological units. The degree of semantic wholeness was at the core of this classification, which set apart three types based on the degree of semantic fusion of the whole unit (phraseological fusion fully non-motivated, phraseological unit partially motivated, and phraseological combination fully motivated). In

psycholinguistic experiments and cognitive studies, idiom motivation came to be seen through general knowledge processes: acquisition, storage, and retrieval.

In addition, evidence provided by contrastive phraseology studies suggested that pure idioms are not fully non-motivated. In this light, the following ‗archetypical pure idiom' (Gibbs, 1995) is analysed: ‗kick the bucket' used to mean ‗die'

There are two etymological explanations at variance as to the idiom ―kick the bucket". The first (Kunin, 1984) has it that the bucket refers to the bucket on which someone who wanted to commit suicide stood on, and that he kicked away to commit suicide. According to the second (Gibbs, 1995), this idiom was meant to refer to the last act of life a pig makes before dying. It is clear from this short account that these two varying explanations bear strong relation to the idea of death.

Translations into French: ‗*passer l'arme (la calanche) à gauche; endosser la redingote de sapin ; passer au royaume des ancêtres; avaler son bulletin (acte) de naissance; casser sa pipe'*, can be used in context to convey the degree of interpersonal and pragmatic functions, ranging from informal to outright substandard language (slang).

A brief discussion of the first French translation (*passer l'arme, la calanche à gauche)* throws light on its extra-linguistic motivation. According to the dictionary ―Chambers Pardon my French!" (2009), ‗*passer l'arme à gauche'* is a military term referring to soldiers standing at ease. To stand at ease means in French ‗*au repos'*, this expression can be further expanded to mean ‗rest in peace' used for die. *Avaler son bulletin (acte) de naissance, 'passer au royaume des ancêtres'* (africanism) clearly evidence extra-linguistic changes and shifts reflected in the repertoire of French idiomatic expressions.

Old-fashioned expressions are less frequently used by language speakers; as a result, these become obsolete, obscure, relegated to the sidelines by new coinages keeping abreast of linguistic and social changes. Working within a corpus of five million words, Spöttl and McCarthy (2004, p.197), for instance, report that the idiomatic expression ―kick the bucket" appears twice only. This idiom is supposedly non-motivated linguistically. In other words, its figurative meaning is not amenable to the cumulative meaning of the lexical items participating in the idiom. However, its motivation can be construed as a loss of the literal meaning in a polysemous idiom, as though there is a disruption between the literal and idiomatic meanings. In the course of time, the idiomatic meaning, given various changes, gained in saliency, whereas the literal meaning fell into disuse.

At closer look, most ‗pure idioms' appear to be deeply motivated both at linguistic and extra-linguistic level, rooted in a given language community practices, material and spiritual world. To conclude with ‗pure idioms', supposedly non-motivated and unanalysable, the following illustrative idioms are taken from Baranov and Dobrovol'skij (2008).They make a strong case explaining that alliteration on the sound [s] may account for their appearance in English idiom repertoire.

- spick and span; Fr. *tiré à quatre épingles*

- safe and sound; Fr. *sain et sauf.*

2.1.6.2 Cognitive-linguistic approach

It has been widely acknowledged by researchers that there is no clear-cut definition encompassing the complex features of idioms. In particular, Langlotz (2006) working from a cognitive framework stands for a holistic approach to understanding idioms. In the sense of the author creativity is at the core of this approach to idioms. Creativity is understood as lexicogrammatical flexibility, which, it was largely accepted

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by theoretical linguistics, as not featuring in idioms. Langlotz (2006) explains that according to Chomsky, linguistic creativity is the process whereby speakers create new sentences and texts in their continual and continuous interaction, making use of the existing word-stock (p.6). Thus, Chomsky's structuralism runs counter to behaviourism based on the routine repetition of pre-heard chunks. The increased emphasis placed on syntax was held to unravel the creative nature of utterances, pushing backwards the lexicon, supposedly made of well-worn, ready-made units.

Idioms were consequently approached from this dichotomy syntax-lexicon, giving rise to conflicting, theoretical models such as the creativity principle and the idiom principle, each purporting to explain the features characterising idioms. Sinclair (as discussed in Langlotz, 2006) called attention to the fact that certain kinds of text afford less freedom of choice. He contrasted the ―open choice principle" with the ―idiom principle"*,* which states that texts generally include ―a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they may appear to be analysable into segments" (p.6).

Proceeding from a cognitive-linguistic theoretical framework, Langlotz (2006) has distinguished three basic defining parameters for idioms.

1. ***Grammatical status (institutionalisation)***. This term refers to the extent to which the term has gained currency within a given language community. Put in other words, how widespread, accepted, familiar is the use of the set word combination.

This institutionalisation criterion is important as it sets limits on speaker ability to coin and use new idiosyncratic constructions. In similar vein, Kunin (1996) highlighted the point that a certain amount of ‗semantic stability‘ is a prerequisite for ensuring communication in a language community since unfettered speaker freedom

to coin new word combinations, or single-lexical items, for that matter, could lead to baffling cacophony. Despite the restrictions resulting from institutionalisation, speakers are free to resort to variants on idioms in furthering stylistic purposes such as humour, pun (Strässler, 1983). It is noteworthy that variants on idiom can be both playfully creative and fraught with ambiguity, resulting in misunderstanding, thus seriously limiting communication.

2. **Form** (compositeness, frozenness). Following this criterion the word combination is understood as a string of words that form, nonetheless, a functional unit. This chunk is restricted at syntactic and morphological levels since its combinatory associations are limited as well as the morphological endings it can carry (number, voice, and tense). The construction is perceived as a multitude of constituents at word level. These combine at the semantic level to give a unit functionally equivalent to a single word.

3. **Meaning** (non-compositionality). The meaning of the constituent words participating in the combination is figurative, not literal, i.e. not derived from the meanings of the literal components making up the combination.

Applying these selected criteria (institutionalisation, compositeness, and non-compositionality) to delimit idioms from other elements of formulaic language is important: thus, idioms are clearly set aside from other borderline elements of formulaic language such as compounds and collocations.

Cognitive linguists (Gibbs, 1995) and Langlotz (2006, p.53), in particular, consider idioms as ―complex, composite word-configurations, rather than lexical units." This approach implies that idioms are a chunk of words ascribed a unit status because their idiomatic meaning can be activated upon uttering their key constituent. Langlotz (2006) suggests that idioms have literal and idiomatic meanings which can

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be mentally processed, at the same time or in turn. In other words, both meanings can be accessed and retrieved in the mental lexicon of a language user, or retrieved literally or figuratively in changing order. Put another way, idioms, in the phrase of Langlotz (2006, p.53), have to be approached as ―complex constructions."

He further explains the fundamental distinction to be drawn within the broader types of idioms. Accordingly, he distinguished (1) a group of idioms that are semantically unanalysable, such as ‗spick and span' and (2) transparent expressions/proverbs: ‗People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.' Langlotz (2006) seems to suggest that between these two basically distinctive categories (idioms and transparent expressions/proverbs) on the wide range of phraseology as a broad discipline there is a variety of constructions which are motivated and compositional, such as collocations.

Given the diverse facets of phraseology in general and of idiomatic expressions in particular, their comprehension can be facilitated through vocabulary instruction as noted by Boers and Lindstromberg (2008, p. 4ff). In addition, contrastive phraseology can be called on to cast light on idiom motivation and comprehension across languages.

2.1.6.3 Contrastive linguistic approach

Sabban (2007) defines contrastive phraseology as concerned with similarities and differences in cultural features characterising idioms in two or more languages (p.590). The author explains that it is important to define first the concept of culture-boundness. She indicates that the traditional views of idioms hold that idioms are culture-bound since they appear *unique* and ***untranslatable***, the fossilized lexical chunks conveying the world-view of a language community (emphasis mine). These views, according to Sabban (2007), do not explain satisfactorily what specifically

constitutes the culture-boundness; instead, she argues, the concept is taken for granted (p.590). In actual fact, Sabban (2007) points out, to compare phraseologies across languages requires stating clearly without ambiguity the (1) culture-boundness of each language, then (2) explaining culture-boundness without reference to a given language phraseology system.

Explaining the scarcity of studies to further theory-grounded research in contrastive phraseology, the author makes the claim that this debate on contrastive phraseology is relatively new (1990s). Sabban (2007) asserts that the term culture-boundness is preferable to culture-specificity (p.590), for avoiding confusion on two grounds. Culture-specific can be used to refer to the group of people itself, and the phrase can be applied to the culture itself. Following the author, I will further use the terms culture-bound or culture-equivalent (Newmark's phrase) to refer to realities, practices, customs, beliefs of a given language community fossilized in idiom repertoire

Sabban (2007) notes that the culture-boundness of idioms is different in ways having to do first with (1) the type of idiom and the related dominant pragmatic function fulfilled by the unit, (2) and the semantic level of meaning (phraseological or literal). From this perspective, she breaks down phraseology into three classes based on their functions in written or spoken communication acts. These are *referential phraseme*, *communicative phraseme*, and *structural phraseme*.

According to Sabban (2007), the class of referential phraseme is used to name, evaluate, conceptualize the real world, act on it and be acted upon similarly. It is culturally marked differently from the communicative phraseme. The communicative aspect of phraseme is expressed through pragmatics, e.g. language in use. Structural phrasemes received no attention in analysis of culture-boundness (p.592).

In referential and communicative phrasemes, argues Sabban (2007), the culture-boundness of single-lexical units is not different from the culture-boundness of phraseological meaning (p. 592). Referential phrasemes focus on denotation (parsing the world into concepts), and connotation (collectively shared evaluations), which combine to express a world-view. These components are less studied in phraseology. On the other hand, idioms and semi-idioms, their composition, and complex semiotic complexity have been widely researched in most investigations into culture-boundness and cross-cultural contrastive analysis of referential meaning.

Sabban (2007) concludes that establishing links between the motivation of a phraseme and culture can explain its culture-boundness. For communicative phrasemes, clear links should be established between ‗modes of usage and culture‗ (p. 592). In this regard, attitudes and values conveyed through stylistic markedness are important elements.

Contrastive-analysis studies on phraseological use concomitantly the terms ‗domain of reference‗ and ‗source domain‗, prevalent in cognitive-linguistic approach to phraseology, for referring to the living environment, natural environment, everyday life, institutions, traditions, social organization, customs, beliefs and superstitions, myths and legends from which the phrasemes originated at a particular point in history and grew over time. As is the case with single-lexical items parsing differently the world-views (Jacobson, 1958/2004) perceptions, social values of language communities, contrastive phraseologists make the point that idioms seen as linguistic constructions reflect primarily the ways in which various peoples see and reflect on their surrounding material and spiritual worlds. As a consequence of their referential nature, Sabban (2007) draws the important conclusion that idioms differ very little from single words (p.592).

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Cross-linguistic studies contributed its insights into phraseology systems across languages. The resulting understanding of contrastive idiom motivation and asymmetry is rich in theoretical and practical implications for translation theory and practice. Its main implication is that idiomatic expressions can be, theoretically, approached as literal words (paraphrasing) in translation. This theoretical assumption entails the relative non-decompositionality and non-transparency of idioms from one phraseology system to another. Put another way, a supposedly opaque, un-analysable idiomatic expression in one language will be transparent, analysable in another language, shedding light on the source language idiom along the way. To illustrate the point under discussion, let us take a fresh look at:

1. **spick and span**, a typical pure idiom, non-transparent, non-analysable, according to the cognitive-linguists Gibbs (1995) and Langlotz (2006). Its corresponding translation in French is *tiré à quatre épingles* or plain *impeccable,* a literal word. Baranov and Dobrovol'skij (2008) have pointedly argued that alliteration on the sound [s] may explain how the expression spick and span is idiomatic in English. In contrast, the alliteration motivating ‚spick and span' is lost in French corresponding idiomatic expression ‚*tiré à quatre épingles'*.

2. **Fier comme un pou**[12] (*ou comme un paon)*, translates into English ‚proud as a peacock'. Understanding the French idiom is not straightforward without relying on etymology (for **pou** in present-day parlance means louse), whereas the English equivalent idiomatic expression makes the comparison clear, with a slight change in the reference (peacock, *paon*, instead of *coq*).

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[12] D'après le Dictionnaire des expressions et locutions (2006: 658-659) **pou** est une forme dialectale de l'ancien français **pouil**, **poul**, du latin **pullus** (coq ou poulet).

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The asymmetry in phraseology systems observed through cross-linguistic studies is conducive to translation strategies appropriate for partial translation. Therefore, equivalent, corresponding idioms, plain translation or paraphrasing, explicitation, glossaries, etc. can be appropriately used in context to render a given idiomatic expression. However, these broad strategies for idiomatic expressions are employed as frames guiding the process of translating, whilst lexicogrammatical changes, rearrangements, changes in image-bearing constituents participating in idiomatic expressions are carried out to achieve overall equivalence. For instance, put the horse before the cart and *mettre la charrue avant/devant les boeufs* are, broadly speaking, corresponding idiomatic expressions in our case language pair (English-French). There are two important differences between these idiomatic expressions. First, the animals referred to are different (horse for *bœufs* (singular vs. plural); second, the same holds true for the tilling implements involved, cart (*charrette*) for plough (*charrue*).

2.1.7 Collocations

2.1.7.1 Defining collocation

The pervasiveness and importance of collocation in SL language learning and teaching have been long recognised across theoretical perspectives (Nesselhauf 2003, 2004; Seretan, 2011). Researchers approached the linguistic subset of collocation from the point of view of their linguistic and pedagogical interest. Nesselhauf (2003), for instance, has shown the ubiquity of collocation and the difficulties they pose to advanced learners of English as a second language. She pointed out that L1 collocation patterning strongly influences advanced L2 learners' free collocation production. She wrote that the problems related to collocations in L2 learning has been saliently stressed by a number of researchers, although the word combination

has not been extensively researched (p.223). Given the diverse theoretical perspectives underpinning research into collocation there is no generally accepted definition of collocation in the literature (Nesselhauf, 2003, 2004; Seretan, 2011).

Citing numerous researchers Seretan (2011, p.2) noted that *phraseological units* can be readily found in _all text types and domains', with an overarching dominance of collocations. In the same vein, Kunin (1996) asserts that the stronger presence of collocations, considered from the broader category of *phraseological units,* is explained by the predominantly analytical nature of English lexicon in general, and the notably increased presence of binomial compounds (noun+noun) in the stock of word combination. Unlike Seretan (2011), Kunin (1996) relegates collocations to the sidelines of phraseology. In the narrow sense of the term phraseology adopted by Kunin (1996) collocations fall short of categorising as constituent of the broad field of phraseology. The main argument Kunin (1996) advanced against including collocations in phraseology is their semantic transparency. Kunin (1996), in this respect, is an outstanding exception, as most researchers seem in agreement that collocations are part of phraseology.

The degree of semantic transparency held by Kunin (1996) is not sufficient in itself. I would argue that semantic transparency is one key feature of collocations. This property would be best used to differentiate between collocations and idioms, however not exclusive of other characteristic features such as contiguity of elements, their routine reproduction and naturalness in language.

Reviewing a body of literature on collocation, Nesselhauf (2003) argued that the main thrust of the theories built in the literature to account for collocation lies in defining the nature of collocations. On the one hand, she explained, Sinclair, Cowie, and others attempted to define formulaic elements based on their semantic and

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morphological distribution in discourse. Nesselhauf (2003) pointed out that the aforementioned authors clearly favour the viewpoint of idioms and phraseological units as ready-to-use items in language. On the other hand, she advanced a novel approach, the restriction criterion, to distinguishing between the continuum of free combination, collocation, and idiom.

A free combination in the sense of Nesselhauf (2003) is a string of words that are semantically restricted. For example, the words _drink a newspaper' (p. 225) are highly unlikely in communication, as one would not normally expect drink with an object, but rather a liquid. Therefore, the typical free combination is *drink water, milk, beer*; a liquid, in essence.

Nesselhauf (2003) views a collocation as a restriction imposed, not by meaning as is the case with free combination, but rather arbitrary by convention, usage, in language. A collocation, in the broad sense of the term, is a combination of words whose occurrence is perceived as natural, typical of this language. To this effect, Nesselhauf (2003) provides the following illustrative collocations: reach a decision, compromise, verdict, goal, but not aim (p.267). The author further indicated that collocations can have different grammatical structures based primarily on the base, the key component in the combination which can variably be a noun, a verb, or even an adjective.

Nesselhauf (2003) proceeded to distinguishing the verbal component as the typical feature characterising collocation (p.225). Put differently, a collocation is built around a fixed-position verb with complementation and prepositional placement or lack thereof. The primary criterion differentiating a collocation from an idiom, as noted by Nesselhauf (2003), is that in a collocation the verb is semantically restricted

(*take a picture, draw a list*), whereas in an idiom, the noun is restricted (*sugar* or *sweeten the pill*).

In this flow of linguistic units of different structures (free combination, collocation, idiom) Nesselhauf (2003) drew a straightforward delimitation between free combination, collocation, and idiom. The writer appears to base her delineation of these linguistic phenomena on their syntactic characteristics, the extent to which each element (collocation versus idiom) is structurally restricted by a grammatical category (verb versus noun).

The restriction criterion selected by Nesselhauf (2003) for delimiting free combination, collocation, and idiom, has a strong, straightforward, point in setting free combination apart from collocation. The semantic restriction governing free combinations and the usage-imposed restriction on collocations are obvious. The restriction criterion has, at close scrutiny, the limitation of confining collocation and idiom to fixed-position noun and fixed-position verb respectively. In fact, all lexical words (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb) feature prominently in collocation (bitter enemy, fully aware) and idiom categories alike. Moreover, grammar words such as by and large, at large, to the hilt, for that matter can be used as key constituents in idiomatic expressions.

Grammar words such as above from the category of idiomatic expressions have drawn the attention of phraseologists and translation theorists alike. Sabban (2007) on the one hand described them as *structural phrasemes*, functioning to connect the flow of written and spoken utterances. On the other hand, Retsker (1982) has noted that they have no clear meaning of their own, deriving their meaning from context; therefore, the daunting challenge they pose in translation. More appropriately than the internal structure (form) determined by a key defining component in the

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combination (collocation or idiom), the key distinction between collocation and idiom should be drawn at semantic level of understanding: literal or idiomatic meaning.

In the words of Seretan (2011, p.2) ―Collocations are generally understood as typical combinations of words that differ from regular combinations in that their components co-occur in a short span of text more often than chance would predict."

This definition given by Seretan (2011) makes clear the affinity, naturalness, ready-made reproduction of elements participating in the combination. Attempting to draw clear boundaries between free word combinations, collocations (considered as fixed word combinations), and idioms, Seretan (2011) established delineation at semantic understanding level. Understanding collocations poses no real difficulty for their meaning is fairly transparent. They share with idioms unpredictability, for their constituents do not fully preserve their individual meanings in contrastive analysis (p. 1). It is important to note that contiguity of constituents, typical-sounding, ready-made reproduction in utterances feature equally in idiomatic expressions.

2.1.7.2 Approaches to collocations

Despite divergent views of definitions and approaches to the term collocation, two main perspectives have been established to capture the complex elements of collocation. The approaches formulated for the classification advanced by numerous researchers can be broken down into two broad perspectives: statistical and phraseological.

1. Statistical approaches

For words to be termed collocations they must appear a fairly good amount of times together, pointing to a bond that holds them together. The bond thus achieved entails natural tendency for words to combine easily. Seretan (2011) explains that a significant shortcoming of the statistical approach lies in its tendency not to pay close

attention to the linguistic aspect of collocation (p.11). It laid stress upon the place, span, contiguity, of the constituent words in the collocation.

According to Seretan (2011) some proponents of the statistical view are Firth, M.A.K. Halliday, Michael Hoey, and John Sinclair (p.33). The latter defines collocation as follows: ―Collocation is the co-occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text. The usual measure of proximity is a maximum of four words intervening" (Seretan, 2011, p.11). Mutual selectiveness also referred to as symmetrical relations is an important feature in delineating collocation from free word combinations. Mutual selectiveness is a concept applied to refer to the characteristics of words to attract one another in combination.

2. Phraseological approaches

Unlike the statistical perspective on collocation focused on the combinatory aspects of collocations, the phraseological perspective puts emphasis on the syntactic relations and grammatical patterns of the constituents of the collocation. This approach, according to Seretan (2011) favours the syntactic relations of the components over their proximity. This increased emphasis on the lexical aspects of participating words in the collocation does not sideline completely the proximity aspect prevalent in statistical perspective. But the collocation is considered in this perspective as the participation of uneven constituents in the combination. In other words, components participating in the collocation are sometimes referred to as base and collocate, to account for the unbalanced relation between the constituents.

2.1.7.3 Key defining features of collocations

The controversy surrounding the concept of collocation is primarily determined by the theoretical models underpinning the statistical or phraseological approaches developed by various phraseologists. As with idioms there is no generally

accepted definition of collocations. Despite this obvious definitional problem, there is, however, general agreement among phraseologists and translators that collocations are a particular subcategory of formulaic language situated between free combinations and idioms (Baker, 1992; Nesselhauf, 2003; Langlotz, 2006; Seretan, 2011).

Moreover, their multiword structure and ready-made reproduction categorise them from free combinations, and to a large extent their literal understanding differentiates them from idioms, on the other hand. Another important difference to be drawn between collocation and idiom is the stylistic markedness charactering the category of idiom.

Collocations and idioms share a set of characteristic features, which makes the task of drawing a clear distinction between them all the more relevant and difficult. The two linguistic structures are prefabricated, arbitrary, unpredictable, recurrent, polylexical, institutionalised. In fact, the syntactic behaviour and language usage of collocations and idioms presents little difference: they are both restricted by usage for collocation and morphologically for idiom.

The first real difference worth stressing on is the semantic understanding. The meaning of a collocation is, more often than not, derived from the total sum of its constituents. In contrast, the meaning of an idiom is not generally amenable to the sum of its components. This clear semantic distinction can be termed literal and idiomatic meanings. In addition, this difference in understanding is illuminated through translation practice where idioms do not lend themselves to word-for-word rendering. The transparent, literal meaning of collocations can result in faulty word association in target text if attention is not paid to differences between collocation patterns across languages. The key difference of idioms as compared to collocations lies in understanding, not reproduction; for the meaning of the former is generally

opaque, non-transparent; the translator/learner may fail to recognise the whole word combination as a semantic unit.

The second significant different between collocation and idiom is associated with the stylistic markedness characterising idiomatic expressions. Although collocations can be found in all domains, they are predominantly stylistically neutral, whereas idiomatic expressions fill a wide range of connotations in communication acts.

The following examples using the same lexical items will illustrate the differences between collocation an idiom at semantic and stylistic level:

1. Run a race; take a picture; hand in a translation.

2. Rat race; put somebody in the picture; lend a hand.

2.1.8 Compound Nouns

In English, a compound noun is commonly used when a single-word noun is not appropriate in referring to a person or thing. The internal organisation of compound nouns is not straightforward: they consist, as a rule, of a noun + noun, or adjective, verb. Their multi-word structure (configuration of two or more words) bears misleading resemblance to collocations and noun modifiers, which all have in common multi-word features. The fundamental distinction between compound nouns and noun modifier, albeit not clear-cut, is primary drawn at the phonological level, with the marked stress falling on the determinant, the first item participating in the compound, whereas in noun modifiers the stress falls on the second item. Furthermore, the whole compound noun is semantically institutionalised, considered as a whole unit by language users.

Compare:

    1. Compound nouns. (**video** shop; **orange** juice; **black**board, 'greenhouse a 'heavyweight 'longhand 'redhead).

    2. Noun modifier (bathroom **door**, fur **coat**, that government **report**[13]

A number of phraseologists assign compound nouns to phraseological units (see Seretan, 2011). As is the case with idiomatic expressions that have got the seal of approval in language community, institutionalisation is a key feature occurring in collocational combinations, as well. In relation to collocations, compound nouns may share similar internal structure (noun + noun, written jointly, separately or hyphenated, adjective + noun,).The fundamental distinction between a collocation and compound lies in the mental processing of the whole unit. By and large, compound nouns retain their literal meanings, amenable to the sum of the constituent words. These meanings are generally transparent.

Still, it should be pointed out that some compound nouns are ascribed an idiomatic meaning. Arnold (1986) set out criteria for differentiating between literal and idiomatic (figurative) meanings assigned to compound nouns. According to Arnold (1986), compound nouns can be delimited based on their motivation. Their motivation is morphological if they derive their meaning from the literal meanings of the constituent items. Their motivation, on the other hand, is semantic if the components are assigned a ‗figurative' meaning (p.35).

The rough rule of the thumb holds that idiomatic compounds are written solid, or hyphenated, allowing no internal space separation. By way of illustration, let us consider

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[13]Examples taken from the Cambridge Grammar of English: A Comprehensive Guide. 2007

the following compounds extracted from Arnold (1986, p.79) with both literal and idiomatic meanings.

1. Eyewash: a lotion for the eye; nonsense, rubbish

2. Headache: pain in the head; any cause of worry, difficulty, annoyance

3. Watchdog: a dog kept for watching property; a person or group of persons that acts as a protector or guardian against inefficiency, illegal practices[14].

Because of the transferred, figurative meaning assigned to some compounds they are easily confused with idiomatic expressions. However, distinction should be drawn relative to their internal structure and their semantics. As has been noted earlier, there is a heavy trend in compound nouns with idiomatic meaning to be written solidly or hyphenated. The spelling of compound nouns is notoriously inconsistent, not subject to a fast and hard rule. Compound nouns written solidly or hyphenated, more often than not, tend to carry an idiomatic meaning as opposed to compound nouns written with space. Some cases in point are greenhouse and green house, redhead and read head, heavyweight and heavy weight; underhand and under hand. This remark should be put in context, for compound nouns written separately with idiomatic meanings can be found in the lexicon. This observation is best exemplified with black list, black market (shaped on blackmail, according to Arnold, 1986), swan song, black swan, glass ceiling.

It can be argued that the strong tendency for compounds to be written first separately, then hyphenated, and finally solidly will prevail over time with regard to these compound nouns currently written separately.

In sharp contrast to compounds, the common view of idiomatic expressions holds that these are multi-word units ascribed a self-contained meaning not derived from

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[14]Entry explanations taken from the Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners. Second Edition. 2007

the sum of their parts. It is noteworthy with regard to the internal structure of idioms that phraseologists (Moon, 1998; Čermák, 2007; Gries, 2008) have pointed out that idioms are not made up of words, but word-forms. This observation, to a large extent, accounts for the deficiencies in morphological endings displayed in idiomatic expressions. Put another way, idioms are not typically inflected for number, whereas compound nouns feature singular vs. plural contrast.

2.1.9 Proverbs and sayings

Proverbs and sayings fall into different categories of word combination as to their internal organisation: they are sentence-like and clause-like fixed word combinations, respectively. As a consequence, their inclusion in phraseology is an unsolved debate in scholarly literature. Many phraseologists, (Mel'cuk, Jackendoff, Moon, Baranov and Dobrovol'skij) proceeding from the broader sense of phraseology, include proverbs and sayings in the term phraseology. By contrast, following several phraseologists (Asomova, Kunin, Alifirenko and Semeneko) I take the view that proverbs and sayings do not fall into the category of phraseology, despite some shared features with the latter, e.g. ready-made reproduction, multi-word composition, conventionalised meaning. As Alifirenko and Semeneko (2009) point out, proverbs and sayings are best studied in paremiology.

The adopted narrow approach to phraseology in the present study is primarily structure-oriented. Criteria for including proverbs and sayings into the field of phraseology should take into account the combination of their structural and semantic features. Whilst proverbs and sayings constitute stand-alone constructions that can function independently as sentence or clause, idioms are restricted syntactically and semantically, not capable of being used independently; they function as parts of sentence or clause, as noted by Gries (2008). In addition, the discourse function (pragmatics)

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fulfilled by proverbs and sayings can be contrasted with idiom use in communication. Most sayings constitute a meaningful strings of words uttered to give additional flavour to utterances, no moral judgements, teachings are attached to the words, as opposed to proverbs characterised by underlying moral overtones, teachings derived from experience.

Furthermore, this distinctive communicative function featuring in proverbs and sayings has been contrasted by phraseologists in an attempt to draw a clear distinction between idioms and proverbs. Alifirenko and Semeneko (2009), for example, write that idioms are broadly categorised as fulfilling a referential, denotative function in utterance, while proverbs perform a communicative function.

Consider the following proverbs with regard to their independent, stand-alone, capability to function as full sentences

1. Easy come, easy go   *Ce qui vient de la flûte s'en va par le tambour*

2. Everything comes to him who waits   *Tout vient à point à qui sait attendre*

3. A bad penny always comes back   *La caque sent toujours le hareng*

4. Christmas comes but once a year   *Tous les jours ne sont pas dimanche*

5. Curses, like chickens, come home to roost *Chasser le naturel il revient au galop*

In conclusion, proverbs and sayings feature ready-made reproduction, semantic unity, figurative or non-figurative meaning with idiomatic expressions. Their distinctive characteristics lie in the stand-alone property they display in relation to idiomatic expressions.

Summary

In the foregoing review dealing with phraseology as an academic discipline, I attempted to highlight the ―many facets" of the discipline. Phraseology encompasses

linguistic structures of different types. Thus, the pluridisciplinary approach adopted to gain insights from different theoretical perspectives is brought about by the complex nature and heterogeneous subsets of the linguistic constructions covered by the umbrella term phraseology, as well as the growing interest in phraseology as evidenced in literature in recent years.

The pluridisciplinary approach allowed approaching idiomatic expressions from different theoretical stances and, therefore, overcoming specific limitations closely related to a particular theoretical model purporting to account for a complex phenomenon such as idiomatic expression.

In dealing with the broad area of phraseology, focus is put on the subcategory of idiomatic expressions. It should be noted that the different perspectives such as theoretical linguistics, cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics, and contrastive linguistics do not stand on equal footing with regard to idiom motivation, comprehension, and translation.

From many linguistic perspectives, idioms have been defined primarily based on their syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features. The traditional view of idiom propounded by theoretical linguists held non-compositionality and syntactic irregularity as key features of idioms. This rigid model, as has been observed in cognitive and corpus-linguistic evidence, fails to explain flexibility and transformation in idiom use. Traditional linguistics considered idiom non-compositionality as a given that hardly lends itself to any reasonable decomposition, analysis of its constituent words. This limitation was addressed, in large part, through cognitive linguistics, which assimilated idiom motivation, access, and comprehension to knowledge acquisition, storage, and retrieval. To paraphrase Langlotz (2006), the bull of idiom motivation and consequent comprehension has been grabbed by

conceptual metaphor and metonymy, leaving little room to arbitrariness, non-transparency, non-decomposition in idioms.

In addition, cross-linguistic studies contributed its insight into phraseology systems across languages. The resulting understanding of contrastive idiom motivation and asymmetry is rich in theoretical and practical implications for translation practice. Its main implication for translation practice is that idiomatic expressions can be theoretically approached as literal words. This theoretical frame entails the relative non-decomposition and un-analysability of idioms from one phraseology system to another. Put in other words, a supposedly opaque, un-analysable idiomatic expression in one language will be transparent, analysable in translation into another language, shedding light on the source language idiom in the process. To exemplify the point under discussion, the following idiom was looked at: *Fier comme un pou*[15] translated into English ‗proud as a peacock'. Understanding the French idiom is not straightforward without relying on etymology (***pou*** in present-day parlance means louse), whereas the English equivalent idiomatic expression makes the comparison clear, with a slight change in the referent (peacock, *paon*, instead of *coq*). *Coiffer Sainte Catherine (*stay unmarried for very long*), pousser des ailes* (become ambitious), rain cats and dogs (*pleuvoir des cordes, pleuvoir à verse*), are some cases in point.

The asymmetry in phraseology systems observed through contrastive linguistic studies is conducive to translation strategies suitable for partial translation (translation between two languages, for example English and French). Therefore, equivalent, corresponding idioms, plain translation or literal paraphrase, explicitation,

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[15] D‗après Rey, A. & Chantreau, S. (2008, pp. 658-659) ***pou*** est une forme dialectale de l‗ancien français ***pouil***, ***poul***, du latin ***pullus*** (coq ou poulet). ***Fier comme un paon*** is a variant on ***fier comme un pou***.

glossaries, etc. can be appropriately used in a given translation context to render idiomatic expressions.

To set out the object of the study, idiomatic expression distinction has been drawn between idioms and borderline formulaic elements such as collocations, compounds, proverbs and sayings. There is wide consensus amongst phraseologists that idiomatic expressions feature three primary characteristics: polylexicality, fixedness, and transferred or conventionalised meaning. These central properties defining idiomatic expression interact in combination, with no single feature being important in itself to account for idiomatic expression.

Idiomatic expression and collocation share in common multi-word structure, routine reproduction, and restriction governed by usage for collocation or morphology and level of understanding for idiom. Collocations are fairly literal, whereas idioms are predominantly figurative. Moreover, idioms are not inflected for number.

The fundamental distinction between idioms and compounds lies in the number contrast peculiarity featuring in idioms. These are not inflected for number and appear as word-forms, while compound nouns can carry singular vs. plural contrast.

PART TWO: TRANSLATING IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

2.2.0 Introduction

This part locks into the first part of the literature review, but it deals mainly with translation theory, with a focus on proven strategies for translating idiomatic expressions.

Unlike translation studies, translation practice, as noted by translation theorists (Garbovsky, 2007; Munday, 2008) has been long documented in Western tradition. Dating back to the first evidenced translation (Septuagint), the theory of translation, also referred to as *Translation Studies* in the narrow sense of the word, did not stand as a comprehensive body of knowledge purporting to account for the process of translating as a scholarly activity until relatively recently. Typically, practising translators were isolated theologians, philologists, and philosophers. Munday (2008, 2009) has made the strong argument that the first translators were, for the most part, concerned with explaining their translation decisions as a way of responding to criticisms levelled at them over the fidelity, faithfulness of their translations. These translation decisions were further described by the translation scholar as ‒idealized recipes'. They evolved around the unsettled opposition between word-for-word versus sense-for-sense approach to translation. This opposition is characteristic of the ‒empirical", ‒pre-linguistics stage" of translation as described by Bassnett (2002) and Newmark (1988, 2009).

Despite the lack of an orderly body of translation theory, attempts were made at formulating the theory and practice of translation (see Etienne Dolet, William Tyndale, Martin Luther). In translating, early theorists and practising translators belonging to this ‒early empirical", ‒pre-linguistics" era did not draw on elaborate linguistic models. Linguistics as an independent discipline was not even in its infancy.

However, the relationship between translation and linguistics has been long recognized. This recognition did not translate into a general agreement on the relevance of linguistic findings to translation theory and practice, though.

The development of translation theory and practice has never been straightforward or linear: the pendulum of the discipline swung. ―Translation", asserts Newmark (2003, p. 32), ―in its very essence does not change." In fact, it is widely acknowledged that the relation to the source text and target text remains the conundrum at the core of translation theoretical models and practical issues. Translation is approached by practising translators and theorists from different perspectives based, for the most part, on the link between translation theory and linguistic theory, as Kohn (2003, p.32) observed to contest the polemical view earlier expressed by Newmark that translation does change in essence. From the ―literal-for-literal" versus ―sense-for-sense" old debate that characterised approaches to translation over centuries, contemporary translation theories moved in close bond with dominant linguistic theoretical frameworks.

With linguistics as a recognized discipline devoted to the scientific study of language, the relationship between investigation into language and translation theory and practice will become more direct. As a result, translation models proposed by various translation theorists will be, to a large extent, modelled on dominant linguistic theories. In this vein, Newmark (1991, p.38) has observed that translation theory has been developed by Nida, Fedorov, Catford, Mounin, Jumpelt, Neubert, and Kade to ―apply linguistics to translation". The same observation could be extended to include Newmark himself and Baker, drawing on Hallidayan scale of meaning.

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2.2.1   Translation and equivalence

The dominance of linguistics over translation has been viewed by some translation theorists as a way forward from the old debate word-for-word versus sense-for-sense approach to translation. On the other hand, the overriding importance attached to linguistic theory over translation practice will bring about a widening gap between translation practice and linguistics. Garbovsky (2007), drawing on many translation theorists, laments this unsettled opposition between word-for-word and sense-for-sense approach to translation theory and practice (p.130). He, therefore, makes the point that this unsolved and continual debate leads to overlooking the most important issue in translation theory, which ultimately defines the very phenomenon of translation: namely, what can be described as *equivalence* between the source and target texts (p.132). This Gordian knot, he argues, can be untied with a relevant approach to equivalence in translation process.

Equivalence as a problem-solving exercise based on translational transformations or shifts (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1972; Catford, 1965; Garbovsky, 2007; Pym, 2010) has been approached differently by translation theorists. Although it is widely acknowledged that defining and achieving equivalence is central to translation theory and practice, there is no generally accepted definition of the term in contemporary translation theory.

Toper, in the words of Garbovsky (2007), makes the claim that the term _equivalence' has been originally used to refer to machine translation; later on, it has been used by R. Jakobson to refer to human translation. In French language, however, the word _équivalent' has been evidenced since the mid-nineteenth century, as pointed out by Garbovsky (see in Baudelaire). Most importantly, in translation history, the term equivalence is not set in stone. As Amos (1973) has noted, the term

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translation, by extension equivalence, evolved in the course of time, with changing meanings: faithfulness, fidelity, truthfulness, spirit, letter, and accuracy, etc. (p.14).

Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) are credited for using first the term equivalence as a translation procedure that they suggested for rendering the wide array of formulaic elements in language (proverbs and sayings, idiomatic expressions, routine formulas, etc.). Pym (2010, p.6) defines equivalence as ―same value, function" relation between source and target-text elements in translation context. Equivalence, therefore, can be furthered and achieved at any linguistic level: morpheme, word, collocation, idiom, clause, sentence, text, and pragmatics (Catford, 1965; Baker, 1992; Pym, 2010). In particular Pym (2010, p.12) went on to theorise that natural equivalence is posited by translators to exist without translation: e.g., ―*the best translations are found when you are not translating.*" *(*emphasis mine)

In the light of these arguments surrounding the key issue of equivalence in translation it is important to point out that the term has twofold sense, (1) as an interlingual concept, ―equal value or function" transfer of meaning (translation per se), and (2) a strategy employed to translate parsed out stretches, units of translation such as idiomatic expressions. In the sense of this study equivalence will be primarily used to refer to form and function same-value relations maintained through translational transformations from source language into target language. Thus, equivalence is in turn seen as a concept and a strategy in translation theory and practice.

2.2.2   Defining translation

This section examines some definitions of translation proposed by translation theorists, with a view to identifying salient elements they consider should feature in translation as delicate balance-striking activity between source and target texts. The

problem under discussion is the ways in which they approach the key concept and procedure of equivalence, and the linguistic levels it is maintained on. However, at the onset it is fundamentally important to disentangle the terminological confusion surrounding the concepts of translating and translation. The former refers to the process of transferring the meaning of a source text into a target text, preserving fully text-type and translation function in the target text. The latter term is used for the end-product that can be observed, described and evaluated based on translation norms of acceptability. Although this distinction is not always clear-cut in literature, it stands to reason to use translating for the complex of transformations and changes carried out for achieving equivalence between two languages. The term translation, therefore, may be reserved for the end-product that can be observed, described, and assessed by comparing the original and target texts.

Many translation scholars (Bassnett, 2002; Garbovsky, 2007; Munday, 2008) have drawn attention to the gap between century-old translation practice and emerging translation studies. Although translation has been long documented, translation studies (translation theory) waxed in importance with increasing interpenetration of peoples in the wake of the Second World War. Despite the long established tradition of translating, practising translators and translation theorists define the very concept based on a set of different principles. This definitional problem, arguably, is related to the very nature of the discipline purporting to define a linguistic phenomenon using language. Furthermore, the difficulty in defining translation is indicative of an emerging field moving in close bond with dominant linguistic models developed over the course of time. Newmark (2003, p.32), for instance, characteristically floated the argument that ‗in essence translation does not change.‘ This polemical remark was meant to draw attention to the age-old dual

approach to translation, word-for-word versus sense-for-sense. This argument was countered by Kohn (2003, p.32) who pointed to linguistic theories framing translation theory over time.

In his paper entitled ‗On linguistic aspects of translation' (1958/2004) Jakobson breaks down translation into three types:

(1) **Intralingual** translation, or ‗rewording': putting into other words what has been said previously in the same language. This reformulating may result in wordiness, repetition for clarification, additions and/or omissions. For example, a speaker can make an original statement, emphasise salient points by tracking back, clarifying, etc.

(2) **interlingual** *translation*, or ‗translation proper': a mediated (original text, translator, and target readership) rendering of words from one language into some other language. Consider for example the classic novel War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy, originally written in Russian, is now available in translation in many languages across the world. This was made possible through lexicogrammatical changes and cultural adjustments from the original Russian text into the intended target language.

(3) **Intersemiotic** translation, or ‗transmutation': involves changing words into another system of signs such as music and picture. To take the same novel a step further, War and Peaceis made into a feature film. This shift in means of expression from the written novel (words) to film (sound and picture) is termed adaptation

From this classification of trannslation types ―interlingual translation or translation proper" is commonly held as translation for communication between

peoples speaking different languages. This is the sense of translation adopted in the present study.

In an attempt to define translation, theorists feature different key elements in their definitions of the concept. ―Translating" as defined by Nida and Taber (1969, p. 12) ―consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style."

Nida and Taber (1969) point to ‗natural equivalent' of the original message. This natural equivalent in target language should be as close as possible to the original with regard to meaning and style. Importantly, the term *natural equivalent* should be construed as though the *translation* was originally written in the target language (Pym 2010). In other words, consider the highly unlikely hypothesis that War and Peace were written in English by Leo Tolstoy. The novelist would have written in idiomatic-sounding, fluent English, free of translationese, albeit reminiscent of his times.

Nida and Taber (1969) point to another key element, the information content of the message should be preserved. Lastly, the style of the target text should functionally correspondent to the source-text style. Nida and Taber (1969) are fully aware of the daunting difficulties involved in coming up with as close as possible natural equivalent of the original message. Accordingly, they suggest the way forward by pointing to meaning and style as recipes for achieving interlinguistic equivalence.

On the other hand, Newmark (1988, p.5) defines the concept of translation as ―Often, though not by any means always, rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text." The translation analyst (self-description) sought clearly to introduce *author intention* as an important defining element in translation. Newmark's definition, however, is partial: he does leave open

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the question of a comprehensive definition of translation by deliberately restricting his definition to a chosen aspect, *author intention*. This term is ambiguous, hard to grasp. Granted that it is possible to elucidate unambiguously author intention, still the translation can be achieved to further another intention, significantly different from the author's. For argument against author intention, Munday (2008) draws attention to present-day translations of *Gulliver's Travels*. The novel was originally a scathing political satire. Over time it came to be translated into different languages for children (adventures).

Bell (1991: xiv) defines translation as ―the transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining, as far as possible, the content of the message and the formal features and functional roles of the original text.‖

Bell (1991) provides a definition centred on the trans-formation of source text into target text. He explicitly recognises that translation is deeply transformative and requires a rendering of content and form that are attained through changes towards achieving a close natural equivalent. This definition captures important elements in translation: transformation, equivalent text, content, formal features, functional roles. Let us consider in some detail the elements involved in this *transformation* and their interrelation.

1. *Transformation*: To translate involves taking across a primary text (source) into a derived text (target). However, this is not, to borrow Bassnett's phrase, a mechanical replacement of source-language words with target-language words, since you will have to make changes that conform to grammar constraints and usage rules of the target text. In our language pair (English-French), we have a number of grammar categories that, at first glance, bear

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much resemblance. At closer look, however, they display wide differences in some respects. Take for instance, noun and article systems, prepositions, and tenses, etc. There is no full correspondence between these categories in translation. It is important to keep in mind that translation is all about **meanings**, not **word classes**. Achieving satisfactory translation will involve lexicogrammatical changes. For example, mass noun furniture translated into French as *meubles* (mpl); dishes (plural) translated as *vaisselle* (fém. sing.). She broke **her** leg: elle s'est cassé *la* jambe (possessive adjective for definite article). These transformations have been broadly termed transposition and rank-shift by translation theorists (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1972; Catford, 1965). They involve the full range of content and function words.

2. ***Equivalent text:*** Simply put, the translation should not be perceived as one, but a natural counterpart. Imagine we have a text in English, how would a comparable text in French be written? Will the patterns be the same in both texts? Or intrinsic differences will emerge? These are the questions raised in the process of achieving equivalent text.

3. ***Content*** is to be understood as the factual information intended by the original text. The translation should be performed with no loss of information or message.

4. ***Formal features***: In dealing with translating close attention should be paid to recreating the style, register, of language used in the source text. The form of language is an essential part of the message being conveyed by the original writer. In fact, it is a commonly held view that content and form are interrelated. To illustrate this point, let us look at the following words:

1. friend (*ami*) **neutral**, buddy (*copain*, *pote*) **colloquial**;

2. cigarette (*cigarette*) **neutral**, fag (*clope*) **substandard**/argot

Using a word or word combination below or above the form of language used in source text is likely to distort the original message.

5. ***Functional roles:*** A written document furthers specific purposes: informative, persuasive, emotive, critical, etc. The role assigned to ST should be equally filled by the translated text, unless the translation instructions are otherwise stipulated.

Against the previous definitions (Nida & Taber, 1969; Newmark, 1988) where the content, form, and author intention are highlighted, Bell's definition brings forth another, complementary, dimension to translation, namely text purpose. What role is assigned to the original text should be reproduced accurately in the target text. This feature brings us back to the concept of author intention advanced by Newmark (1988). The two intentions are to be distinguished, though. Text purpose should be set against the cultural, philosophical background of the source; whereas, author purpose is narrower in that it relates to the message that the original intends to get across to his target readership.

From the above definitions proposed by Nida & Taber (1969), Newmark (1988), and Bell (1991), key features characterising translation can be pointed out: (a) the transfer of an original written message from one language into another language; (b) preserving, as closely as possible, the intended response or effect expressed by the author. In other words, this process can be schematically subsumed to two steps: (1) content rendering and (2) form recreating. Balancing content and form is a prerequisite for achieving the much sought-after equivalence in translation. However, this dual division of translation may be misleading as it may appear as though translation is a mere criss-crossing between source and target texts. In actual fact, as

Bassnett (2002) and Newmark (1991) have rightly emphasised, the process of translating is not a straightforward replacement of elements of one language by elements of another. The process involves decisions pertaining to grammar, lexis, and message to be made.

2.2.3   The units of translation

The controversy surrounding the unit of translation is reflective of the wider debate about the unsettled issue over word-for-word versus sense-for-sense translation in achieving equivalence. Thus, the open discussion about the unit of translation can be illustrated through different descriptions of the concept by translation theorists. Shuttleworth and Cowie, in the words of Hatim and Munday (2004, p.17) write that the unit of translation refers to _the linguistic level at which ST is recodified in TL'. In the sense of Shuttleworth and Cowie, the term linguistic level encompasses word, word group, clause, sentence, paragraph and even whole text.

According to Vinay and Darbelnet (1972, p.37) the unit of translation should be construed as _The smallest segment of utterance whose sign cohesion is such that they must not be translated separately'[16]. The Canadian authors go on to distinguish four (4) units of translation: (1) functional units in which constituents participate in the same grammar function; (2) semantic units, as suggested by the name itself, represent a linguistic construction carrying a meaning (*sur-le-champ*, immediately, on the spot; *avoir lieu*, take place); (3) dialectic units, they structure utterance (*en effet*, *puisque*), and (4) prosodic units in which constituent parts participate in the same intonation.

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[16]*Le plus petit segment de l'énoncé dont la cohésion des signes est telle qu'ils ne doivent pas être traduits séparément (translation mine).*

Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) conclude that the last three units make up the units of translation in their sense (p.38). These can be approached from the point of their formal structure, internal organisation. Therefore, they can subsequently be (1) simple units, corresponding to single words; (2) diluted units, a word combination carrying a self-contained meaning. These represent collocations in modern term; (3) fractional units; the unit is just part of a word, which means that the word composition is still felt by the speaker. The authors contrast the unit of translation made up of *single words* with *combined units*, integrating two or more words with the highest degree of semantic fusion. The so-called *idiomatisms* fall into this category.

It is important to emphasise that Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) approach idiomatisms in the broader sense of the word, lumping in this category heterogeneous linguistic types such as collocations, fixed expressions, routine formulas, proper idioms, proverbs and sayings, etc. Although they share multi-word internal structure, ready-made reproduction in utterance, and for some figurativeness (full or partial), it is more appropriate to differentiate between them based on their degree of syntactic flexibility, semantic range, and pragmatic function in language. These characteristic properties, at close look, motivate their comprehension and recreation at cross-linguistic level.

Shuttleworth and Cowie as discussed in Hatim and Munday (2004), Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) in their respective definitions of the unit of translation make their point from the perspective of the source-text language. They proceed from different linguistic levels (word, word group, clause, sentence, paragraph, text) conveying certain meaning in source text, without so much attention being paid to the counterpart of these parsed out segments in the target text. Their approach to the unit of translation may, therefore, be described as source-text oriented.

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In literature, other approaches have been described, highlighting the intimate relation between the source and target texts. In the words of Garbovsky (2007), Barxhudarov provided the following view of the unit of translation (p.253ff), where the unit is approached from its strong correlation to the target language. The unit of translation is defined as the meaningful word-string used in the target text to equate with the source text corresponding segment, proportion.

This dual, often competing, approach (source-oriented versus target-oriented) led some translation theorists to introduce a third element, an invariant, to measure up the extent of equivalence. This is known as the *tertium comparationis*. It serves an intermediary level between the source and target languages to refer to the unit of translation (Garbovsky, 2007; Pym, 2010).

In keeping with his broad division of general translation (as opposed to partial translation) into semantic and communicative approaches, Newmark (1988, 1991) considers the sentence and paragraph as the units of translating in communicative translation, where the message should be crafted to fulfil the grammar constraints and usage rules of the target-text language. On the other hand, shorter stretches (clause, collocation, word-group or even single lexical word) of sentence are viewed as translation units in semantic translation, which is mainly concerned with _technical, political, official texts'.

In his approach to translation, Newmark (1988) makes a strong case for rendering content words (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb). In translation, the translation analyst stresses, lexical difficulties are more common than grammatical ones (p.32).Vocabulary-related difficulties are twofold: failure to understand the source text, and inability to render a given lexical chunk into the target language. At this level, figurativeness characterising most common words may cause

misunderstanding. Newmark (1991) emphasised that the comprehension of single words in translation, contrary to a widespread misconception, is most often context-free, but strongly determined by its combination pattern with other words (p.87). This view is strengthened by Baker (1992), who, with a varied range of word combinations in mind, suggested setting up equivalence in translation at different linguistic levels including word, word-group, sentence, grammar, text, and pragmatic level.

In sum, there is no profound difference in approaches to the unit of translation among translation theorists. Many translation scholars seem to be in agreement that the unit of translation is the word or word combination of varied internal structure, consciously or intuitively, divided up by the translator when working on the source text. The rationale behind parsing translation into meaningful segments is the furtherance of equivalence. Equivalence is thus sought and achieved primarily in one translation direction, from source text to target text. The opposite translation direction (target text to source text) is hardly taken into consideration when defining and maintaining equivalence as concept. Regardless of the configuration of the unit of translation (single-word item or multi-word unit), the property held as fundamental is the semantic wholeness of the unit. According to many phraseologists (Kunin, 1996; Moon, 1998; Langlotz, 2006) idiomatic expressions feature prominently semantic unity. Vinay and Darbelnet (1972), for instance, assigned them to the category of unit of translation.

2.2.4 Equivalence as a translation concept

Historically, the concept of equivalence was holding sway in the communicative period of translation history, from around 1950 to 1970, when translation theorists strove to apply the ―findings of linguistics‖ to translation theory and practice (Garbovsky, 2007; Newmark, 2009; Pym, 2010). It is noteworthy that the

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term equivalence or faithfulness is not static, stable. Reflecting on translation and equivalence, Amos (1973) has appropriately noted that varied terms have been used to refer to the same phenomenon of ―equal-value relation", in the phrase of Pym, between source and target texts such as faithfulness, truthfulness, spirit, accuracy, etc. (p.14). In similar lines of reasoning, Garbovsky (2007) and Pym (2010) pointed out that the debate surrounding equivalence has been going on in different translation models.

Translation critics, on the other end of the spectrum, discounted translation altogether over differences in response or effect between the source and target texts. Put differently, they contend that equivalence is not achievable in translation because of the asymmetrical nature of languages (Mary-Snell Horby, Vladimir Nabokov).

The stance taken by the researcher is that equivalence is a translation problem solved through lexicogrammatical transformations and cultural adaptations carried out at different linguistic levels. Consequently, the un-translatability views held by translation critics are not looked at in any detail, just a cursory comment to hint that the very activity of translation is often called into question.

Attempting to attain equivalence Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) proceeded from the assumption that translation is not based on literal words in a given language seen as system of signs. They considered, rather, language in the light of communication. Transcending the dichotomy *langue-parole* traced back to Saussure, their approach is based on language in use (*parole*). For example, an anecdote recounted by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) set them about looking for an appropriate translation for a road sign (Slow), poorly rendered in French (*Lentement*, for *Ralentir*). Their 1958 work reprinted in 1972 work grew out of this anecdotal mistranslation. In the illustrative anecdote alluded to, communication as the main

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purpose of translation (Munday, 2008; Newmark, 2009) appears significantly disrupted, since natural equivalence is not attained in the translation offered (*Lentement*).

The unabated debate surrounding translation is focused on the conditions defining and motivating equivalence: what is meant by equivalence and why achieve equivalence. As a result, the concept has been dealt with differently by translation theorists.

2.2.4.1 Catford's formal and textual equivalence

Catford (1965) explains that in translation a clear distinction has to be drawn between (1) empirical equivalence established by comparing SL and TL texts, and (2) the conditions leading to translation equivalence (p.27). The empirical equivalence established through observations should be divided in turn between textual equivalence and formal equivalence.

A textual equivalence in Catford's sense is an equivalence achieved through observations and regarded to be equivalent as a result of comparison of given segments of source and target texts in a given translation context. On the other hand, a formal correspondence is any TL grammar category counterpart, filling the ‗same' place in the utterance as in the SL. Given the specific combinatory patterns characterising individual languages, formal correspondence is difficult to achieve in translation, hence always ‗approximate" argues Catford. Consequently, translation shifts defined by Catford (1965) as breaking with formal equivalence are widely resorted to in attaining equivalence in the process of translating.

Having developed a five-rank hierarchy comprising sentence, clause, group, word, and morpheme, Catford suggested two complementary types of shifts to

substitute for the evident lack of interlinguistic formal equivalence: rank shift and level shift.

Rank shift is an upward or downward change following grammatical categories words are fitted in. In other words, a given grammatical category (part of speech) can be moved up or down when the translator has to overcome grammatical problems to achieve smooth, usage-approved translation.

For example, I am confident of success;

Fr. *je suis sûr de réussir (*noun success translated as *réussir (verb).*

This point cannot be overemphasised in the process of translating, for there is great temptation to translate word-class for word-class, with consequent atypical word combinations, and ultimately poor translation.

Level shift in the sense of Catford (1965) means that a grammatical item is substituted with a lexical item. Catford's translation shifts capture comprehensively translational transformations carried out in transposition procedure in the frame of oblique translation method expounded by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972).

According to Catford (1965), textual translation equivalent is any TL text or portion of text regarded as equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text as a result of observation, comparison. Contextual equivalence as described by Catford (1965) bears much resemblance to the notion of *tertium comparationis* discussed earlier. Catford (1965) further explains that this kind of translation equivalence is established with the help of knowledgeable bilingual informants or translations. The equal-rank element that will be changed in the process of translating is the equivalent.

Catford's theory of translation shifts (rank and level) is not to be contrasted with oblique translation method elaborated by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972). They, if

anything, are complementary and seek to achieve equivalence through transformations where formal features of languages do not correspond.

The translation shifts developed by Catford (1965) for achieving equivalence are centred essentially on single-lexical words and collocations (pp. 10-11); therefore, his translation model pays little attention to longer stretches of recurrent word combinations such as idiomatic expressions and proverbs. The changes in word class that result from grammatical category permutation can, however, be appropriately used in translating idiomatic expressions, since these call for changes in word order and class, and image-laden elements constituting the whole expression.

Faced with the lack of natural, one-to-one equivalents between languages involved in translating, translation theorists strove to clear this hurdle through wide use of changes, transformations carried on the target text to reflect the content, form, and function of the source text.

2.2.4.2 Nida's formal and dynamic/functional equivalence.

Nida (1964/2004) advanced the concepts of formal and dynamic (later termed functional) equivalence. Nida (1964/2004) states that formal equivalence is close rendering of the ―form and content of the original message" (p.134). It requires no translational transformations carried out on the target text to conform to the grammar constraints and usage rule of the language involved. On the other hand, dynamic equivalence is natural-sounding, fluent, idiomatic translation oriented to the target readership. It does not attempt to bring the reader closer to the original; rather, focus is shifted towards the target text, as if no translation were performed.

According to Nida (1964/2004), translation principles aimed at setting up equivalence are not limited to these two orientations at the opposite end of translation direction (source-oriented vs. target-oriented), allowing intermediary levels of

equivalence. Obviously, the translation scholar favours the concept of functional equivalence achieved through *naturalization*, *domestication*, where the SL text is brought closer to the intended readership. Unlike Catford (1965) who detailed translational transformations carried out on short stretches of words for attaining equivalence, Nida (1964/2004) does not concern himself with procedures having to do with small changes carried out in translation in order to achieve equivalence.

Rather, Nida's attention is fully devoted to cultural equivalents and idiomatic expressions in translation context (p. 136). Attempting to overcome the shortcomings related to functional approach to translation such as loss attributable to lexical gaps between source and target cultures, Nida (1964/2004) will eventually shift emphasis from *naturalization*, based on functional equivalence, towards incorporating glosses, explanations, footnotes, references.

2.2.5 Translation strategies

Whilst translation methods are approaches used for achieving translation based on text type, translation purpose and instruction, translation procedures also termed translation techniques or strategies are used for smaller meaningful stretches (translation units) of language within that text. The process of translating is widely viewed as ―problem-solving exercise‖.

In dealing with translation, problems arise at grammatical, lexical, and pragmatic level. Translation procedures are therefore applied for solving the above identified problems. In particular Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) emphasise that translation procedures will have to do with (i) lexis, the meaning, usage of words, (ii) arrangement, structure of words, and (iii) message being conveyed (p.44ff). Unlike translation approaches or models which concern themselves with longer units such as paragraph and whole text, translation procedures are strategies, techniques applied by

translators to transfer elements of meaning within a sentence. Based on text type, text function, translation purpose and comments, among others, the translator can employ a variety of strategies for completing the translation at hand. As a rule, a combination of procedures can be used in a single text to achieve a good-quality translation.

Translation procedures have been proposed by a number of translation theorists (Catford, 1965; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1972; Retsker, 1982; Baker, 1992). While their types of translation procedures or strategies differ significantly in terminology, the translational transformations or changes they describe are not substantially different in many respects. These translational transformations can be broken down into three basic levels: lexis, grammar, and text (pragmatics).

2.2.5.1Vinay and Darbelnet's translation procedures

In this section, I pay close attention to the translation methods and procedures described by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972), in their relation to the unit of translation considered as a divided up meaningful segment of source text. Vinay and Darbelnet's book (1972) is widely recognised as seminal for contrastive analysis of English and French languages (Garbovsky, 2007; Munday, 2008; Pym, 2010).

In their comparative stylistics, Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) put forth seven (7) main translation procedures or techniques, falling under two methods they termed direct translation and indirect (oblique) translation. Although the authors drew only on French-English language pair, the broad methods of translation (direct translation and indirect/oblique translation) and ensuing procedures they illustrated abundantly in their contrastive work have exerted far-reaching influence on other language-pair translation as well (Munday, 2008; Pym, 2010).

Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) divide translation into two methods (*démarches* in French): direct translation and oblique translation, with regard to increasing

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difficulties likely to face the translator in the process of translating (p.46-47). The suggested procedures are resorted to for overcoming the encountered difficulties that arise in translation process over the lack of natural equivalence in target language. In other words, translation procedures, also termed strategies or techniques, are lexicogrammatical changes and cultural adaptations meant to bridge the lexical and cultural gaps.

Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) divided direct method into three (3) procedures: borrowing or loan, calque, and literal translation; and oblique/indirect method is in turn divided into four (4) procedures: transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. According to the authors, borrowing, calque, and literal translation do not pose particular difficulty, for they involve filling lexical gap through words transferred ready-made into the target language, or word-for-word translation of the source-language elements into the target language, and highly parallel arrangement of sentence constituents between cognate languages.

For Vinay and Darbelnet (1972), transposition and modulation present particular interest for the translator as they involve transformations, changes carried out to further and maintain equivalence seen, in the phrase of Pym (2010), as ―same value or function relation" between source and target texts. These translational transformations (or shifts for Catford, 1965) are predominantly of grammatical nature in the case of transposition. As described by Vinay and Darbelnet they are to deal with:

1.   word class (mass noun in English for count noun in French)

2.   word order (adjective placement in English and French)

3.   function words (determiners, prepositions)

4.   The gerund (nominalization, verb, adjective, clause, etc.)

5.   Tense replaced by a lexical word.

Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) acknowledged themselves that modulation presents special interest as it involves changes in perspective, viewpoint between source and target texts. Put in other words, we witness a change in point of view, perception. Typically, modulation involves the following: (1) result-to-cause, (2) antonymic reverse (negative for affirmative and vice-versa), (3) concrete-to-abstract, (4) part-to-whole, (5) time-to-place.

Some illustrative examples taken from their work are as follows:

1. Shorter working hours: (this expresses the result); *réduction de la semaine de travail* (this expresses the cause)

2. It is no light matter: *c'est une chose sérieuse* : shift from negative to affirmative;

3. Give a pint of blood: *donnez un peu de votre sang* (concrete-to-abstract)

4. Cover-to-cover : *du début à la fin* (part-to-whole)

5. The moment when : *le moment où* (time-to-place)

While transposition and modulation are grammatical and lexical translational transformations carried out to establish equivalence in shorter lexical units of text, equivalence and adaptation are employed as procedures to achieve same-value or function relations at word combination and culture-bound word level, respectively. It has been discussed earlier that Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) distinguished four types of unit of translation, namely the functional unit, semantic unit, dialectic unit, and prosodic unit, which are acted on for attaining equivalence. From the point of view of their structure, these units of translation have been classified in three (3) types: simple unit, diluted unit, and fractional unit. Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) assigned idioms to the broader category of diluted, combined-word unit.

The inclusion of different types of formulaic elements in the word *idiomatisme* (pp. 52-53) has been put into question, and it has been pointed out that their heterogeneous, complex structures call for a differentiated approach to their translation. It stands to reason that formulaic elements such as compounds, collocations, idioms, and proverbs display significant differences in their motivation, comprehension and recreation in target text. Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) give a wide variety of word combinations to illustrate the linguistic construction they termed *idiomatisme*: These include: *à bout portant,* point blank; *mettre à pied* meaning to dismiss; *à mon corps défendant*, in self-defence; *avoir lieu*, to take place; *s'en prendre à*, to blame; *faire fausse route*, to go astray; and *l'échapper belle*, have a narrow escape. Particular emphasis is put on ―*groupements par affinité[17]*‖ centred on key-words such as nouns and adjectives: *un hiver rigoureux* for a severe winter; *un bombardement intense* for severe shelling; *un refus catégorique* for a flat denial, etc.

2.2.5.2 Equivalence as a translation strategy for idiomatic expressions

Typically, the problem of equivalence is approached in close relation to the unit of translation. In the process of translating equivalence is thus furthered and achieved at different linguistic levels: morpheme, single lexical items, word combinations, covering a wide range of structural and semantic features (such as collocations, fixed expressions and idioms, clauses), sentences, paragraphs, and whole texts. Although formal equivalence can be achieved at lexical and grammatical levels through one-to-one direct translation, rank-shift and level-shift, namely change in word class and shift from grammatical category to lexis (Catford's level shift), words are seldom used in isolation to make spoken or written utterances, as emphasised by

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[17]These bear strong resemblance to present-day term collocation.

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Newmark (1988) and Baker (1992). Even when they occur to be used singly, they are constrained by communication situation, which sets limits to their potential meanings.

Translation theorists (Catford, 1965; Newmark, 1988, 1991; Baker, 1992) have pointed out that utterances, most often, depend on their (1) linguistic and (2) situational context. The linguistic-boundness is most manifest in collocational patterning. The situational-boundness is the shared cultural and spiritual experience of language users. For Baker (1992), this bonding feature is most salient in fixed expressions and idioms, setting a context for communication (p.64). The characteristic complexity (multi-word composition, semantic unity, and figurative meaning) of idioms calls for a wide combination of strategies to apply in translation.

2.2.6 Translation strategies for idiomatic expressions

Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) explain that equivalence as a translation procedure (the 6th procedure out of 7 procedures they detailed) is primarily employed for rendering elements of formulaic language: idioms, fixed expressions, proverbs and sayings, clichés, similes, authorial quotations, greetings, etc. (p.52). Formulaic sequences represent a wide category of varied linguistic constructions, which are ready-made available and reproduced in spoken and written utterances by language users. They are typically characterised and differentiated by their degree of fixedness in semantic features and syntactic behaviour. Considered from the broader perspective of formulaic elements, idioms represent a narrow subset of phraseologism, with specific syntactic and semantic features, and pragmatic function. Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) do not assign idioms to a clear-cut subcategory. They woefully contend that their translation is based on the translator's linguistic competence, giving no clues as to how to overcome difficulties arising in idiom translation.

The difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions are more challenging than rendering fixed expressions and collocations. For the most part, fixed expressions and collocations are monosemous, ascribed a literal meaning, whereas idiomatic expressions are polysemous, carrying both literal and idiomatic meanings (Retsker, 1982; Baker, 1992; Seretan, 2011). The idiomatic meaning poses the greatest translation challenge: it is particularly difficult to grasp for EFL learners, and subsequently reproduce in target text because of inadequate background knowledge and exposure to idiomatic expressions, in stark contrast to native speakers living in a setting permeated with these linguistic constructions.

Idiomatic expressions have been defined from a number of theoretical perspectives based on characteristic features centred on their multi-word structure, syntactic fixity, non-transparent meaning, and stylistic connotations (Retsker, 1982; Baker, 1992; Langlotz, 2006; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008). It can be argued that transferred meaning (figurativeness as opposed to linguistic, literal meaning) and multi-word structure in idioms are properties that are more relevant for their translation. Indeed, in figurativeness, as pointed out by translation theorists (Retsker 1982, Baker 1992) lies the main difficulty in translating idioms from one language into another. The extent of figurativeness displayed by idioms, however, is not parallel, on cross-linguistic level. To substantiate this point, let us look at the following examples with regard to their degree of figurativeness or literal meaning in our language pair (English-French).

1. Horse sense, *sens commun;*

2. Dog-eared, *écorné*;

3. Beat around the bush, *tourner autour du pot;*

4. Dot the I's and cross the T's, *mettre les points sur les i.*

The first two examples in French (*sens commun, écorné*) are structurally and functionally equivalent to post-modified noun and adjective; the metaphoric basis of the English idiom is lost in French translation. The last two expressions exemplify idioms (*tourner autour du pot, mettre les points sur les i*) and function as verbs in both languages, but use different imagery to convey the same idea of undecidedness and meticulous completion. The last example in English (Dot the I's and cross the T's) features more image-bearing-elements than the French corresponding idiomatic expression.

It is clear from this short account that there is no straightforward strategy for rendering idiomatic expressions. Unlike Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) whose approach to equivalence as strategy for idiom translation has the severe limitation of relying on translator innate knowledge, Baker (1992) explains that the rules pertaining to using idioms across languages are not identical in a number of respects: frequency, register and context should be paid close attention in recreating idiomatic expressions in target text (p.71). Baker (ibid.) argues the point that ―English uses idioms in many types of text, though not all." With these constraints on idiom use and translation in mind, Baker (1992) suggests a pedagogical way forward for dealing with idioms and fixed expressions, in particular. She, therefore, breaks the process of translating idioms and fixed expressions into two consecutive steps: (1) identifying and understanding, and (2) reproducing (pp. 65-68).

1. Identifying idioms and fixed expressions is difficult in the first place. According to Baker, they are most often polysemous (literal and idiomatic meanings). Because of their figurativeness idioms strike as odd, nonsensical if translated literally in a given translation context. This oddness resulting from literal translation is a sure signpost, alerting the translator that he has stumbled, hit on

an idiomatic expression. Another difficulty related to idioms is grasping the meaning. For EFL learners figurativeness typically characterising most _pure idioms' makes them particularly difficult to comprehend without previous exposure or appropriate hint contributed by context. This obvious difficulty, however, is alleviated as pointed out by Gibbs (1995) through cognitive processing, which operates on the relations of similarities and extension between two things (metaphor) and part-to-whole (metonymy), making unfamiliar idiom accessible either in isolation or in context.

2. Recreating: Translating idioms, like single words, is constrained by frequency, usage and semantic range. It is not enough to have equivalents (formal and functional) in the target language to use idioms in translation. Baker (1992) in similar lines of reasoning with Retsker (1982), a decade before, has noted that the rhetoric, stylistic dimension of the equivalent in target text should be taken into consideration. In other words, having equivalent idioms in the target language is not enough, since register and context are to be taken into account to achieve fluent translation. This cautious approach to translating idiomatic expressions is underpinned by the assumption that idiomatic expressions can be rendered in plain translation or literal paraphrase. Baker (1992) concludes that the decisive criterion for idiom selection in target text should be the stylistic associations in the target text (p.71).

Thus, in dealing with idioms and fixed expressions, Baker (1992[18]) suggested four basic translation strategies. These are summarised as follows.

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[18] In the second edition of her coursebook on translation published in 2011, Baker offered a complementary fifth (5) strategy for idioms and fixed expressions; this strategy is termed _borrowing the source language idiom'. Reference is made throughout the study to the first edition dated in 1992, unless otherwise indicated.

1.   Using an idiom of similar meaning and form

2.   Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form

3.   Translation by paraphrase

4.   Translation by omission

The first free translation strategies for idiomatic expressions suggested by Baker (1992) are commonly practised, not open to criticisms; for they are abundantly exemplified by the translation scholar (for illustrative examples see pp.72-78). On the other hand, I would argue that the fourth translation procedure (translation by omission or avoidance) is highly problematic in at least two respects.

First, empirically model examples are not given in any extent in translations as opposed to illustrations supplied abundantly for the first three strategies. Next, there is the important question of idiomatic expression use in written utterance. As has been emphasised by Abeillé (1995) and Kunin (1996), idioms carry a specialised meaning, fulfil a pragmatic function which is not substituted for with literal words. Idioms are stylistically marked in discourse for fluency and vividness conveyed through their idiomatic, specialized meanings (Sabban, 2007). They are, therefore, used in spoken and written communication to carry emotional, attitudinal dimension. Leaving idioms un-translated would amount to truncating the translation from an important element in terms of form and expressive connotations. An idiom may be omitted in translation if the above mentioned strategies (1-3) are not suitable due to lack of equivalents in the target language, possible paraphrases, and also it does not carry factual information, as indicated by Newmark (1988).

In this case, the translator can reasonably compensate in another part of the translation at hand. It is worthwhile to emphasise that Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) sternly warned translators against resorting to idiomatic expressions of their own

coinage (through loan or calque), for the sake of equivalence, for readers may fail to understand their new coinages (p.52). In actual fact, idiom omission is hardly practised. The difficult task of translating idiomatic expressions has occupied another translation scholar – Y. Retsker, who devoted much attention to idioms in particular.

In particular Retsker (1982) emphasised the point that in relation to translating idiomatic expressions, the translator should be knowledgeable of phraseology theory. Retsker (1982) suggests the translator must not, however, concern himself with the formal structure of phraseological units as modelled on the tripartite classification described by Vinogradov (phraseological fusion, phraseological unit, and phraseological combination). Instead, his entire attention should be devoted to recognising, understanding and recreating the idioms that the source text will throw his way.

As discussed earlier, Baker (1992) differentiated idioms and fixed expressions based on their degree of flexibility and level of understanding: literal or idiomatic (p.63ff). Thus, she draws the fundamental distinction between the two structures: idioms are polysemous (literal and idiomatic meanings), while fixed expressions are comparatively transparent, literal.

Shifting focus to encompass a wider variety of words and word combinations, Retsker (1982) makes the point that figurativeness (full or partial) is the only appropriate criterion for translation-decision to be made. Broadly speaking, free word combinations and set word combinations share in common a set of features such as multi-word constitution, semantic frozenness and stability. Figurativeness, similarly, features in single-lexical words and various types of fixed word combinations such as idiomatic expressions.

Retsker (1982), therefore, makes the main claim of his approach that figurativeness (full or partial) is the only appropriate criterion for translation. As a result, single-lexical nouns, compound nouns, collocations, when used figuratively, can be assimilated to idioms (p. 144). Consequently, the techniques he suggested for translating idioms are centred on two (2) key parameters:

(a) the degree of semantic fusion of the constituents participating in the idiomatic expression, and

(b) the degree of figurativeness displayed by the items in the set word combination.

To put another way, this approach can be summarised as follows: (1) so-called pure idioms whose overall meaning is not deducible from the meanings of their parts, (2) and the more motivated set combinations with a full or partial transfer of meaning are dealt with differently, as a consequence. The latter subset of idioms, on account of the motivation of their component words, is more open to lexicogrammatical transformations and creative manipulation of individual components or the whole expression (Retsker, 1982; Baker, 1992; Abeillé, 1995; Gibbs, 1995; Langlotz, 2006; Baranov & Drovolʻskij, 2008).

Explaining the tendency for some proverbs and saying to feature similar internal composition across languages, Retsker (1982) asserts that this striking similarity is explained by common cultural heritage of some European languages. He approaches proverbs and sayings as a separate subclass of formulaic sequences, not to be included in phraseology in the narrower sense of the term. Consider some examples he gave (p. 145):

1. Be in the seventh heaven – *être au septième ciel* (note au ciel, for in heaven).

2. *Play with fire – jouer avec le feu*

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3. Put the cart before the horse – *mettre la charrue devant/avant les bœufs* (see the differences between the lexical elements, horse/*bœufs and cart*/charrue carrying the imagery).

4. *Charité bien ordonnée commence par soi-même* – Charity begins at home.

Following the long-established tradition of Soviet school to refer to phraseologisms as phraseological units, ultimately traced back to Ch. Bally, Retsker (1982) states that these linguistic constructions, as compared to proverbs and sayings, may have similar form, but different meaning and usage restrictions across languages. As a result, phraseologisms should be translated into the target language employing equivalents that conjure up similar image. Arguing in similar vein with Vinay and Darbelnet (1972), Retsker suggests that the translator should not coin his own variants on idioms. Instead, he should rely on the repertoire of idiomatic expressions provided by his target language.

Retsker (1982) distinguishes between translating idioms proper (phraseological fusion) and phraseological units. In translating phraseological units with metaphorical overtone, the translator must strive to recreate the metaphor, using different means, if necessary. In phraseological fusions, the transferred meaning may be lost even on native speakers, so the translator has to recreate an equivalent idiom with similar meaning and stylistic function. He supplies the following example of phraseological fusion to illustrate his point: To hit the hay: *mettre la viande au torchon* (more vulgar than the English idiom), *aller se coucher; pieuter (*literal paraphrase*)*.

As noted by Retsker (1982), when used too often phraseologisms become stale, worn-out, and their expressive edge may be ‗obscured', lost, not felt by even native language speakers (p.149).

Jeter sa gourme – sow one's wild oats

To pull somebody's leg – *faire marcher quelqu'un, mener quelqu'un en bateau*

Put one's best foot foremost – *faire de son mieux*

To shake a leg – to dance

Retsker (1982) suggests that failing to find an idiom with similar meaning and stylistic connotations, one should sacrifice stylistic markedness to maintain referential meaning (content information). In translation, he argues, it is important to preserve the national colour of idioms. For example red tape – *bureaucratie tatillonne, paperasserie*. (It was common practice in England to tie files with red thread).

 Furthermore, Retsker (1982) explains that dual actualisation is a special translation technique used for rendering phraseological units seen as (1) individual constitutive lexical words, and as (2) a whole integrated unity of meaning. An example in point is: Go to the dogs: *péricliter, aller à vau-l'eau.* In translating phraseological units with a figurative (image-laded) determining noun, Retsker distinguishes four guiding strategies. This distinction is mostly applied to phraseological units whose meanings are deducible from the additive sum of the whole unit. The techniques applicable to phraseological units are described as follows:

1. Fully preserving the source language image (similar meaning and similar form, for Baker)

2. Partially maintaining source language image (similar meaning but dissimilar form, for Baker)

3. Fully replacing the source language image

4. Not transferring the source language image (paraphrase for Baker)

(1) The first technique is used in dealing with a variety of structural forms. But some forms tend to figure more prominently such as fixed metaphors and periphrases, proverbs and sayings, catch phrases, as well as borrowings in Russian from English and French.

Dead letter	*lettremorte*
Bluestocking	*bas bleu*
The lion's share	*la part du lion*
Body and soul	*corps et âme*
To gild (sugar, sweeten) the pill	*dorer, adoucir la pilule*
Not to see the wood for the trees	*les arbres cachent la forêt*

As can be noted, the image is fully preserved in translation in all the above examples.

(2)   In the second translation strategy, consisting in partially preserving, the foreign text image is maintained, with a slight lexicogrammatical change. The change may involve one constituent lexical element motivating the image. Therefore, this metaphor can be substituted with a close element in target text:

in the dead of night	*au profond de la nuit*
in broad daylight	*au grand jour*
cannon fodder	*chair à canon*
a diamond of the first water	*un diamant de la plus belle eau*

It can be seen clearly that the image is preserved, but the grammatical form (category and morphological ending for number contrast) of the idiomatic expression is altered in translation.

To have the news at first hand	*apprendre les nouvelles de première main*.
To give a free hand	*laisser les mains libres*.

(3)   Considered from the point of view of their creative reproduction in target-text language, source-text idiomatic expressions whose images are changed are challengingly difficult. Retsker (1982) and Newmark (1988) were keen to strongly emphasise in agreement that reference and idiom dictionaries fail to account for all contextual uses language users can make of a given idiom. Moreover, dictionaries cannot keep abreast of fast-paced semantic and syntactic changes that languages are likely to undergo.

(4)   Not transferring the source language image: Idiomatic expressions are typically reflective of the national character of a language. As a consequence, it is two-fold difficult, maintains Retsker (1982), to transfer both the national feature reflected in image and the stylistic markedness. Failing to recreate simultaneously these two salient features, one has to settle for an appropriate corresponding expression in the target-text culture. Retsker (1982) stresses the point that idiom motivation is closely related to idiom translation (p.159). See the following examples for their culture-bound motivation: to throw in/up the towel (AmE); to throw up the sponge (BrE) Fr. *jeter l'éponge; déposer les armes*.

According to Retsker (1982), image-free phraseological expressions are semantically difficult to comprehend (p.163). The emotional-expressive load they contain is coupled with the subjective, attitudinal, evaluation of reality. These kinds of phraseological units fall into the grammatical category of modal words and expressions at the same time. Their complexity has been paid close attention by translation theorists and phraseologists alike. Sabban (2007), for example, termed this type of word combination *structural phraseme*, used to organise spoken or written utterance. As noted by Retsker (1982), the difficulty their translation presents lies in two respects: understanding and recreating in target text.

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(1) As phraseological fusions, they do not lend to decomposition or analysis of their constituent words.

(2) Component parts fit into the same grammatical category, rank; their main component is typically semantically void, empty.

More importantly, context is of substance in this category of phraseological expressions. This explains why their semantic range can be exceptionally wide. See for example, for that matter translated as *d'ailleurs*, etc.

Finally, compensation is another translation strategy suggested by Retsker (1982) for dealing with idioms. The technique is applied for restoring the lost source-text image to a place in target text where it makes sense.

Retsker's approach to idiom translation is based on the classification of phraseological units proposed by Vinogradov (1947). While acknowledging the fundamental categories of this taxonomy (phraseological fusion or idiom proper, phraseological unit, and phraseological combination), Retsker (1982), however, extends the concept of idiom to include varied lexical items ranging from single-lexical items ascribed a figurative meaning to word combinations of different semantic and syntactic types. As noted by numerous phraseologists and translation theorists, figurativeness features prominently in idioms (Baker, 1992; Gibbs, 1995; Kunin, 1996; Moon, 1998; Langlotz, 2006; Baranov & Dobrovol'skij, 2008), but this property cannot be singled out for characterising the concept of idiom. Other features such as multi-word structure, semantic wholeness, and certain syntactic fixity should be taken into consideration in any working definition of the concept.

From translation perspective the extent to which idioms are decomposed and analysed accounts for the difficulties encountered in their interpretation and recreation in source-text language. Difficulties experienced in translating idiomatic expressions

pose the question of translation direction. In the words of Baker (1992), a translator must translate into his mother tongue or language of habitual use (p.64). The assumption underpinning this translation direction (SL/FL-L1) is that the acquisition and use of formulaic elements is much easier for native speakers of a given language. While good command of formulaic elements by EFL learners indicates high proficiency in foreign language, the point has been argued that this process with regard to idioms in particular is never complete. Learners are clueless at times when faced with idiomatic expressions in written and spoken utterance. These obvious difficulties can be explained by the lack of exposure to idiomatic expressions as compared to native speakers living in a setting infused with these linguistic constructions.

2.2.7 Culture-Bound words and expressions

Culture-bound words and expressions are fairly coalesced words and word combinations that are typically challenging in translating. Sabban (2007) explains how culture-bound words and expressions reflect the ways peoples segment differently their natural surroundings, experiences and world-views (p.591ff). From contrastive perspective, it is clearly evident that the source and target languages draw on domains or source fields that may not parallel, depending on the linguistic and cultural imagery they resort to fill their idiom repertoire.

The difficulties involved in culture-bound words and expressions are linguistic and cultural. On the one hand, language communities use different linguistic means to express similar things. Next, they draw on their socio-cultural setting to express their experiences, practices, and beliefs. Since these fields that shape their outlook are different, in the words of Sabban (2007), it is not surprising that translating culture-bound words and fixed expressions is fraught with difficulty (p.595). As these

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linguistic structures depict different realities, the translator must be aware of this gap at cross-linguistic level, strive to come up with an ideally close counterpart in the target-language culture, which can prompt a similar response from the target reader. Compare the following source language idioms with their corresponding translations with respect to their culture-boundness, national flavour:

1. Throw up the sponge (BrE); throw up/in the towel (AmE); Fr. *jeter l'éponge; déposer les armes.*

2. Bring/carry charcoal to Newcastle, *apporter de l'eau à la rivière;*

3. Grin like a Cheshire cat, *avoir un sourire fendu jusqu'aux oreilles;*

4. Not enough room to swing a cat, *plein comme un œuf (une épingle ne tomberait pas par terre).*

Culture-bound words and set expressions, according to Newmark (1988), who favours the term cultural equivalent, may be translated. They can be explicitated for clarity sake, deleted if they do not carry much referential meaning (p.74). They are best served with adaptation procedure as described by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972). Some illustrative examples taken from various writers are cricket translated culturally *pétanque* or *cyclisme* for national sport; *baccalauréat* – A level; sun as oasis, for Arabic speakers for whom sun is synonym with hot weather; whereas oasis evokes nice weather and pleasure (Baker, 1992).

2.2.8 Equivalence in collocations

In contrast to idiomatic expressions, collocations are broadly defined as set word combinations that are transparent, easy to understand because of the composite literal meaning of their constituent parts. By similarity, collocations feature multi-word structure, arbitrariness in language with so-called pure idioms and some idiomatic compound nouns as well. Their translation, however, compared to idiomatic

expressions is fraught with difficulty not because of understanding, but rather on account of the compelling temptation to reproduce unwittingly the collocational pattern from source text to target text. As emphasised by translation theorists (Newmark, 1988, 1991; Baker, 1992) translation difficulties may arise in rendering collocations: languages combine words in different ways. Baker (1992), in particular, points to the great temptation to mirror the combinatory patterning of the source language (p.54).

From translation perspective, collocations present noticeable variations in their formal structure and semantic range. In other words, they combine different grammatical parts and carry different semantic associations from one language to another. This twofold mismatch can give rise to translation difficulties that can be illustrated as follows:

Dry country (*pays qui interdit la vente de boissons alcoolisées*) = adj + noun rendered in a whole clause.

Dry day (*jour sans pluie*) adj + noun translated as noun – preposition – noun

This translation pitfall often results in atypical, non-idiomatic collocations in target text. As a technique to overcoming the interference of the source text, Baker (1992), in similar vein with Newmark (1988, 1991), suggests putting aside the draft translation for some time before returning back to it with fresh look, not tainted with the source language word combination patterns.

The view of collocation errors in translation is indirectly supported by Nesselhauf (2003) who proceeded from phraseology perspective in a study drawing on advanced German learners' free collocation production. The author drives the conclusion that L1 influences strongly L2 collocation production. In translation, on the other hand, the source language collocational patterning appears to be mirrored to

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some extent by translators/students. The moderately literal meaning of collocations, as opposed to idioms, at closer look, does not help in preventing these translation errors. Failing to maintain equivalence through typical, natural, collocations in translation, the target text may look non fluent, with a whiff of poor translation.

Summary

Formulaic elements have been long recognised and approached from different theoretical perspectives. Proceeding from French language stylistics, Ch. Bally was first to take a close, systematic look at what he termed phraseological units. The classification he advanced was adapted and further developed by Vinogradov who is widely credited with establishing phraseology as an independent academic discipline. His tripartite taxonomy (phraseological fusion or idiom proper, phraseological unit, and phraseological combination) derived from Russian lexicology is still regarded as the leading classification in the field. Criticisms have been levelled at its shortcomings (fuzzy boundaries between the components of his tripartite classification) and indiscriminate transferability to other languages. These criticisms sound valid with regard to the internal structure of parts constituting different categories of his division. In other words, the tripartite division may be replicated across languages, with considerable lexicogrammatical changes dependent on the language under study. It is highly likely that a phraseological fusion, phraseological unit, or phraseological combination, in Russian, will be translated into English or French with a semantically equivalent idiom having different internal composition.

1. Grin a Cheshire cat (opaque, culture-bound idiom) – *sourire jusqu'aux oreilles* (transparent, plain translation)

2. Red tape (reference to practice going back to history) *bureaucratie tatillonne* (the historical dimension is lost in translation)

Cross-linguistic studies contributed their insights that similarities and differences between phraseology systems may be explained through their repertoire composition. This view is further enhanced through the translation of idiomatic expressions, with a direct relevance to idiom motivation. From the perspective of theoretical linguistics ‗pure idioms' were viewed as non-motivated, unanalysable. Tackled with the help of cognitive-linguistic and cross-linguistic studies, idiom motivation came to be seen in a new light.

Two distinct sources motivate idioms: language and culture in their permanent change. Non-motivation, long held as a given, primarily characterising so-called ‗pure idioms' is easily debunked through language and culture shifts. Set word combinations derived from key motivating words may change beyond recognition, but the image they are supposed to convey remains vividly expressed in other, newly coined set expressions. As an illustration, let us look at:

- Kick the bucket compared to * No longer buy at Aldi's. *Casser sa pipe* and *Avaler son acte de naissance*.
- *Coiffer sainte Catherine* (historically) be 25 and still unmarried.
- *Fier comme un pou* (coq, paon) proud as a peacock

At closer look, these idiomatic expressions and their synonyms belong to different periods of time. Kick the bucket is being relegated to the sidelines by the newly coined synonyms No longer buy at Aldi's (Burger *et al.*, 2007), or *Avaler son acte de naissance,* or still closer to home *Aller au rayaume des ancêtres*.

The central issue of non-motivation, non-transparency described by traditional linguistics as the characteristic features of idioms is therefore to be scrutinized through conceptual metaphor as described by cognitive linguistics and cross-linguistic

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studies. From this angle, idioms are fairly motivated linguistically and culturally. This two-edge motivation restricts their understanding for EFL learners, more significantly than native language speakers who can heavily rely on their setting infused with idioms and cultural allusions. The significant contribution of cognitive linguistics to idiom comprehension is that it assimilates idiom comprehension to knowledge acquisition process through conceptual metaphor and metonymy.

It has been repeatedly stressed that the process of translating involves more than the mere replacement of lexicogrammatical elements of one language with another's. As pointed out by Sabban (2007) idiomatic phrasemes (her terminology) can be referential, communicative, and structural (p.591ff). This overlapping in idiomatic expressions can compound their understanding and recreation in target text.

The theory of phraseology can be of practical help to translating when based not on structural properties or internal composition of idioms, but focused on the semantic range and stylistic connotations of the linguistic units. Given the complexities of idiomatic expressions (opaque, transparent, analysable, decomposable) translation theorists employed a combination of strategies for dealing with them. These strategies are largely context-bound and target-text oriented.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and conduct and details the rationale that underpinned the selection of the study as an exploratory case study, carried out to address the research problem and related questions.

The study was conducted in *Université des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako* (ULSHB) and focused on the causes of the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions (English-French). The study consisted mainly of two complementary components: desk research involving the review of literature and fieldwork.

The foremost focus of the latter component was data collection by source (students, lecturers, observations, etc.) and method (questionnaire, interview, test, documents, etc.). Fieldwork was conducted in two spells over time constraint experienced by the researcher on entering the field. Thus, the initial stage of fieldwork consisting of data collection (questionnaire, interview, official documents) lasted three months, from July to September 2013. The following phase lasted from January through March 2014, and was fully dedicated to in-class observation. The cumulative amount of time devoted to fieldwork is 6 months.

The chapter presents the target population, sample size and techniques, and research participants. In addition, it details the data collection procedures and instruments. As pointed out by research methodologists Gillham (2000) and Creswell (2007) the researcher as participant observer is an important instrument in case study. His role in data gathering is explained by his ability to interact efficiently with research participants, and ultimately make their voices heard. His theoretical

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assumptions and background, however, can lead to biases and limitation that can be appropriately addressed through reflexivity and triangulation. Therefore, I give an account of my background and competence as researcher, thus pointing to my deeply-held assumptions and potential biases in conducting the present study.

̶Qualitative research", asserts Creswell (2007, p. 37), ̶begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens." This body of knowledge acquired by the researcher before he enters the field, Creswell further indicates (2007), should be unambiguously stated by the researcher. However, the researcher's interpretation should be supported by data collected from multiple sources, to ensure trustworthiness and credibility.

3.1 Philosophical Assumptions Underpinning Qualitative Research

Qualitative inquiry for obtaining knowledge is a recent development compared to quantitative research, which was traditionally prevailing in natural sciences and social sciences alike (O'Leary, 2004; Kusi, 2012). Going back to the 1960s, these authors indicate, the relevance of quantitative research in social sciences and humanities came under close scrutiny and was questioned by scientists and researchers, thus bringing about qualitative research. The qualitative research method came to be designed and carried out to overcome the observed drawbacks and failures of quantitative research in addressing the in-depth complexities and interrelated phenomena in social and educational environments. Qualitative research is intended to gain a fuller understanding of issues and problems of interest.

In stark contrast to the quantitative approach to acquiring knowledge grounded in the positivist perspective positing that knowledge is given, existing objectively, independent from the researcher, and waiting to be discovered through rigorous scientific methods as pointed out by Kusi (2012, p.12ff), the basic tenet of qualitative

inquiry, on the other hand, holds that knowledge is constructed, interpreted, pieced together strand by strand, as ―an intricate fabric, composed of minute threads" (Creswell, 2007, p.35). Favouring qualitative inquiry over quantitative research or vice versa is determined by a set of assumptions or guiding principles held by the researcher when undertaking inquiry (ibid: 15).

Two fundamental issues are of paramount importance in designing and conducting any of the two methods (qualitative or quantitative), as indicated earlier, for scientific research. These two issues relate to (1) ontology (reality, existence) and (2) epistemology, knowledge and the process of its acquisition (Kusi, 2012, p.2 passim). As a result of this dual stance, the nature of study being carried out by a researcher is generally determined by his position on reality and how knowledge is gained.

The first assumption has it that social world is an objective entity existing independently of the researcher, a tangible entity. The second assumption departs from this stance and views reality as a social construct that can be seen through the prism of subjective human experiences and interactions. Derived from the ‗nominalist school of thought' this assumption refutes the argument advanced by the realist assumption and contends that social reality is not independent from humans, it is not a given reality existing out there. Rather, it is shaped and experienced by humans in their manifold interactions. The nominalist assumption underpins the ‗interpretative paradigm' widely accepted as the theoretical foundation for qualitative inquiry approach (Creswell, 2007; Kusi, 2012).

These authors are in agreement and explain that qualitative studies are framed by this ontological perspective on social reality. Subsequently, this position on knowledge and its acquisition has far-reaching consequences on decisions regarding

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research design and conduct. Citing Grey (2004), Kusi (2012) lists three epistemological positions: *objectionist*, *subjectionist*, and *constructivist*. It is beyond the scope of this study to delve into these positions. The brief account of these positions presented above is intended to:

(1) point to the fundamental theoretical differences between qualitative research and qualitative inquiry approaches to gaining knowledge, and

(2) more importantly for my purposes, to foreground the case study approach that was subsequently adopted in carrying out the present study.

The topic of the study is the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions (FL-L2). In Mali, at university level in modern languages faculties, translation is taught as aid to foreign language (FL) teaching and learning. The study was specifically interested in identifying the causes of undergraduate student difficulties in translating English idioms into French (L2).

It is worth emphasising that intrinsic idiom translation difficulties (English-French) are compounded with the specific linguistic environment of the study. In Mali, French is the official language (L2), the target language in the present study. However, its reach is socio-linguistically limited to being the language of instruction that is used primarily in administrative settings (Sanogo, 2007; Skattum, 2008). Consequently, students' command of the target language and familiarity with its idiom repertoire is a major difficulty not to be overlooked in translation process.

The research involved a pre-test (translation assignment) and a real-life translation examination paper targeting idiomatic expressions. The pre-test was administered to four three-year focus groups participating in the study. The examination test was taken by two focus groups drawn from the initial four focus groups. The translations obtained from the pre-test have been dealt with in class, and

translation examination papers have been sampled, categorised by translation strategies and subsequently analysed and interpreted in data analysis.

3.2   Defining Qualitative Research

As a recently developed and still ‗emerging approach' to acquiring knowledge there are widely varying definitions of qualitative research among research methodologists and, more strikingly, within the publications of an individual research methodologist (Creswell, 2007, p.36). With this evolving nature of qualitative research in mind, Creswell (2007) pointed out that definitions of qualitative research are ―evolving, not ‗fixed". In that light it is interesting to draw a comparison between two definitions provided by the methodologist himself, a decade apart, in 1998 and 2007.

> Qualitative research is defined as an inquiry process of understanding, based on a clear methodological process that uses a social or human process by building on a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducted in the natural setting.
> (Creswell, 1998, as cited from Owu-Ewie, 2011, p.6).

Looking at this definition of qualitative research set forth by Creswell one can highlight the following features characterising qualitative research: (a) exploratory, (b) methodological, (c) comprehensive, (d) descriptive, (e) participatory, (f) and set in natural context. On the whole, qualitative research seeks to enquire into social phenomena with a view to gaining fuller understanding and establishing links between occurrences. It does not aim at establishing causal-effect relationships between them, or making generalisations allowing further prediction, as is the case with quantitative research. Rather, the approach is focused on the use of multiple instruments enabling many perspectives of the issue under investigation to be looked at closely (Gillham, 2000, p.2). The comprehensiveness in selecting tools involves

strong interactions between the researcher and research participants in their natural environment. Finally, qualitative approach is cast in words and images for full expression of participants' perceptions, views, etc.

A latest ‗working' definition for qualitative research given by Creswell (2007) is as follows:

> Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns and themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action (p. 37).

As can be seen from this extended quote, Creswell (2007) introduced new important characteristics into his latest ‗working' definition of qualitative inquiry. These key features can be summarised and restated in the following words. First, it is explicitly recognised that theoretical ‗lens' informs research design and conduct. Humans, it is argued, confer meaning to problems. Along this reasoning, Kusi (2012) seems to agree with Creswell (2007) in that theoretical perspectives frame the entire process of research, starting from the design to the conduct.

With regard to qualitative research design in particular, Creswell (2007) points out that this does not fit into a rigid, fit-all model, for the research design is largely determined by the research problem and questions to be addressed. Given that these may evolve with the researcher entering the field, they are likely to be modified, adapted to reflect insights gained from the field.

Furthermore, data are collected, analysed and interpreted for establishing patterns and recurrent themes. Close attention paid to participants' perspectives and the personal _style' of the researcher have been highlighted in the previous definition.

These featured prominently in the former definition, and they are not significantly new in comparison to the latter definition, although the emphasis may have been shifted slightly. At closer look, pushing the boundaries of knowledge and the call for action derived from the study are two significant insights expanding qualitative research definition.

The complementarity between the two definitions is self-evident: the former definition is highly abstract, not oriented towards practice; whereas the latter definition makes an important recognition: qualitative research is practice-oriented, with a call for action.

For these highlighted characteristics (detailed collected data, natural setting, participants' voices, researcher's role, etc.), qualitative research approach is appropriate in addressing comprehensively specific questions which do not fit into the narrow, sometimes laboratory-like, setting of quantitative research approach. To achieve in-depth understanding qualitative research approach uses a number of types: ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological, narrative.

3.3 Characteristics of Case Study

From the perspective of its constitutive elements, a case study is the blend of two equally important words, each carrying a significant semantic weight: case and study. A case is typically one-time occurrence, event, in a natural environment. Creswell (2007) differentiates two types of case study based on size: a single case and a multiple or collective case study (p.76). A researcher chooses a single case focused primarily on illustrating an issue. An individual, a group, an organisation, an

institution, a social community, a country at large can be considered as a single case. A multiple or collective case is a combination of several individual cases utilised by the researcher to illustrate the issue under investigation.

A study is a systematic, methodical investigation into a specific occurrence, event, with a view to exploring, describing, or explaining it, drawing upon multiple sources for data collected in the course of research. To put this in another way, a case study is, broadly speaking, an orderly investigation conducted in natural setting with a view to addressing specific questions, drawing upon multiple tools for data collection. Gillham (2000) stressed the point that case study research characteristically draws its strengths and weaknesses from the use of varied sources of data (p.2). Using various types of triangulation by *source* (lecturers, students, officials, records, etc.), and by *method (*interviews, questionnaires, observations, and in-class assignments/tests) allows the researcher to ensure validity and reliability.

Marczyk *et al*. (2005, p.106) emphasise the importance and intimate relation existing between *reliability* and *validity* in case study: ―Although reliability is a necessary and essential consideration when selecting an instrument or measurement approach, it is not sufficient in and of itself. Validity is another critical aspect of measurement that must be considered as part of an overall measurement strategy. Whereas reliability refers to the consistency of the measure, validity focuses on what the test or measurement strategy measures and how well it does so."

Research methodologists (O‗Leary, 2004; Kusi, 2012) have noted that the need for adopting qualitative research approach to obtaining knowledge arose as a consequence of the failure of quantitative research approach to present a comprehensive, ‗complex picture‗ of phenomena under investigation, without disregarding conflicting details.

3.4   Rationale for Case Study

In literature, it is a widely acknowledged that quantitative research approach, focused primarily on experiments conducted out of the natural setting of participants, had some significant flaws not to be overlooked: (1) the non-natural, laboratory-like context of the study being conducted, (2) unbalanced ‗power relation' between researcher and research participants (Gillham, 2000), and (3) the characteristic tendency for the research approach to proceed deductively, moving systematically from the broader, general picture, to specific case, overlooking, or ‗diluting' the specific aspects of individual cases. The approach, understandably, puts strong emphasis on causal-effect relationships between phenomena under investigation.

Conceptualizing the need for case study in research, Gillham (2000, p.11) writes that one of the rationales for carrying out case study is ―to 'get under the skin' of a group or organization to find out what really happens - the informal reality which can only be perceived from the inside." This argument is in line with one of the frequent criticisms raised against quantitative approach to gaining knowledge, for the somewhat un-naturalistic conditions in which the research activity is carried out. Obviously, this criticism underlines the importance attached to defining characteristics of case research in general.

In stark contrast to the quantitative inquiry, a qualitative study seeks to reflect the manifold dimensions of a problem of interest, with a particular focus put on the context, insights, perceptions, feelings expressed by research participants to the researcher. Gaining ‗in-depth' knowledge of the research setting and participants requires, by necessity, strong interactions between researcher and research participants. It has been repeatedly stressed by research methodologists (Gillham 2000; Creswell, 2007) that researcher immersion into the real-life context of the study

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is a crucial condition since he as participant observer is an important instrument in the research process.

However, the snag in ‚getting under the skin' lies in gaining access to and acceptance by research participants who may view the researcher as an ‚outsider' and portray him an idealized image of their setting, instead of presenting their real conditions, experiences. Consequently, they may not be willing to share their insights into their experiences. Therefore, the crucial role of the researcher has been pointed out by Gillham (2000, p.47), ‒the researcher is a research instrument, and any instrument used makes some contribution, has some effect on what is found."

Finally, a qualitative inquiry is predominantly descriptive, using words, audio and video materials to capture the complex interrelations of the phenomena under study, whereas quantitative research is distinctively numerical relying heavily on statistical analysis. Furthermore, Creswell (2007) draws attention to emerging instruments in information age, such as e-mail and web content.

Objectivity is a vital criterion in designing and conducting case study research (Gillham, 2000; Creswell, 2007). Objectivity presupposes no prior theory framing the research study. On the contrary, theory should ‚emerge' from research evidence drawn from different, often not converging, sources. Objectivity, admittedly, is difficult to achieve, for before entering the field the researcher has exposure to an existing body of knowledge and is guided by assumptions supporting his positions on social reality (Creswell, 2007; Kusi, 2012). In addition, his personal interest in the problem being explored and his observer participation can, if not addressed properly, lead to subjective expectations and personal biases likely to distort the findings.

Reducing possible elements of subjectivity, therefore, appears important as a means for lending credibility to the study. In research process, there is great

temptation to develop a flawlessly streaming theory supporting your assumptions. Gillham (2000, p.29), for instance, explains that intellectual probity requires that the researcher should not conceal evidence that seemingly contradicts or sets limits to his emerging _theories'. He went on to draw the conclusion that it is crucial for the researcher to approach these emerging _discrepancies' and _qualifications' with close attention, to get a holistic, not monolithic picture centred on his expectations.

3.5   Case Selection

To achieve in-depth understanding, qualitative research approach uses a number of types for data collection: ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological, narrative (Owu-Ewie, 2011). Therefore, I chose case study to address my research problem which does not fit into the contrived frame of quantitative research approach. The research problem is the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic translations into French (L2). This research problem, understandably, can have some bearing on translation difficulties in general context. Its fundamental difference still lies in its specific restriction to selected EFL undergraduate students in a natural setting over a duration of time. According to Marczyk *et al*. (2005, p.162) ―Case studies involve an in-depth examination of a single person or a few people". This scope of case studies could be widened to include, among other things, institutions such as hospitals, schools, organisations, social communities, and countries. Case study relies on a wide variety of sources for information gathering such as questionnaires, interviews, direct observations and official documents, to lend trustworthiness and credibility to the findings derived from the study.

In spite of the obvious advantages of case study (comprehensiveness, multi-method data collection, and primary focus on participants' perspectives, researcher's

role, etc.) the approach presents disadvantages that, if not addressed properly, can negatively affect research findings.

Case studies are primarily concerned with one-time problems, which cannot be fully replicated to ensure generalisations that can lead to formulating theories. Furthermore, researcher bias can significantly distort the overall picture that should gain visibility on completion of the study. Another disadvantage can be gaining access to and acceptance by research participants. These obstacles can ultimately bring about changes in the initial design of the study. However, it is common practice to triangulate in order to address these potential weaknesses.

As the use of multiple sources, triangulation (both by source and method) is practised in research to ascertain that these different sources of information lead to congruent results. In the words of Gillham (2000, p.29) researchers have noted that there is ―discrepancy‖ between data collected from different sources: ‗what people say, what they do, and what records point to‗. The author expands that often the resulting picture is ‗mixed‗ because sources really reflect differences. In the sense of Gillham (2000) the lack of ―straightforward‖ triangulation does not mean that the piece of evidence being used is not ―true‖, but rather that the link established in the triangulation does not exist or has to be approached differently. Trustworthiness will be achieved as the result of the combination of different sources with their strengths and weaknesses.

3.6   Design of the Study

This study was a within-site exploratory case study seeking to explore the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating (FL-L2) idiomatic expressions. The study aimed at identifying specific translation problems posed by idioms in EFL learning and teaching context. Idiom translation difficulties

will, evidently, point to significant differences with regard to the translation direction considered (L2/FL to L1 or L1to L2/FL) and linguistic environment of the student translator (L1 vs. L2). The study is not an exhaustive evaluation of EFL learners' translation skills, but is concerned primarily with translating idiomatic expressions into French (L2), for idioms are challenging from the perspectives of understanding in source text (English) and recreating in target text (French).The study was not concerned with translating idiomatic expressions from French into English (L2-FL), despite its potential benefits in foreign language acquisition (FLA).

The research is a qualitative case study targeting EFL undergraduates in *Université des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako* (ULSHB).

The primary data collection tool is a corpus drawn from real-life translation examination paper taken by two three-year university groups. Prior to this real-life translation examination, a translation assignment, pre-test, targeting idiomatic expressions was administered in four three-year groups to explore translation patterns of their productions, and allocate the translation sequences they provided to four (4) strategies for idioms described by Baker (1992).

The translation test was corrected in participant two (2) groups for students participating in the study to be fully aware of their errors and strategies employed to translate the targeted idioms. Similarly, real-life translation examination productions (passages) were allocated to strategies used, to facilitate their subsequent description under different categories of translation errors. The resulting translation outputs were described, analysed, and interpreted in the light of the research problem and questions. To achieve trustworthiness, content analysis of translation-related documents (curriculum, syllabus) in-class observations, questionnaires, interviews with research participants were constructed and carried out.

The present study does not purport to be a large-scale investigation designed to find generalisable truths that can be invariably replicated in different settings. However, it is expected that its results can stimulate further inquiry into translating idiomatic expressions in an FLA context, and in the field of translation, at large.

3.7 Population and Setting

The general population targeted are the large numbers of English language learners at university level who have mastered the basics of English grammar and vocabulary. The target population represented EFL undergraduates (2-4 university years) at *Faculté des Lettres, Langues et Sciences du Langage* (FLLSH). Having English on their curriculum for at least 8 (eight) years, starting with secondary school, they are expected to have acquired a fair command of written English in different text types. The present study was conducted in *Université des lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako* (ULSHB).

3. 8 Participant Selection

The research participants were focus EFL student groups, selected lecturers who have teaching commitments in translation, and the researcher participant observer. The present study explored difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate learners in translating idiomatic expressions from English into French (FL-L2). The study was specifically focused on translation from English (FL) into French (L2).

3.8.1 Students

The study was focused on two (2) three-year groups of university undergraduate students. These are advanced learners of English with regular exposure to wide array of text types containing idiomatic expressions. These learners came from two separate groups out of the four focus groups participating in the translation test carried out earlier in April 2013. The target groups were all at advanced level in

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English learning. They were of similar proficiency in English, for they are taught the same university subjects by the same lecturers.

At *Faculté des Lettres, Langues et Sciences du Langage* (FLLSH) all university subjects are taught in English, with occasional translations into French offered by lecturers regardless of the discipline being taught. The student population (166) was strikingly gender-unbalanced, with twenty-six (26) female students and one hundred and forty male students (140). The participants were purposefully selected because they are studying English and therefore involved in translation. Their age bracket is from 21 to 24 years.

The social and linguistic background of the participants has not been taken into consideration in their selection, nor has their personal motivation for translation been assessed. It is assumed that these variables cannot be measured appropriately; moreover, their relevance to skills in idiom translation is questionable. Participant students display comparable proficiency as they are taught the same disciplines by the same lecturers in the same educational environment. They went through the same education system with French as a medium of instruction before entering university. In sum, it is argued that they share in common comparable proficiency in French and English. Still, some participants may stand out for their particular skills in both source and target languages.

3.8.2   Lecturers

The study involved four lecturers having translation on their teaching loads. They have been purposefully selected for two main criteria: their teaching English as a foreign language and specialism in practising and teaching translation. Those selected lecturers were my key informants. They completed the questionnaire electronically distributed to them. Subsequently, two of them took part in the face-to-

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face interviews built on their completed questionnaires. The questionnaire and interview covered questions about their education background, how they came to teaching translation, their valuable insights into idiom translation difficulties and strategies in EFL context. Their assessment of students' translation skills in general, and idiomatic expression translation (FL-L2) in particular has been asked for. In addition, their views of the difficulties lecturers are faced with in teaching translation were probed into. In the process of evidence gathering it was not uncommon to approach them informally for their insights into translation practice, curriculum and pedagogy. One of the key informants was observed in translation class during three months. The other was approached for discussion focused on translation, idiom translation difficulties, informed opinion on students' performance in translating English idioms into French.

3.8.3 Self as researcher

This study is my first major academic undertaking. Prior to embarking on the research study I took up course in research methods. The course allowed me to understand the different approaches to scientific inquiry, the methodological design and tools for data collection and analysis in research process. With these newly acquired skills I redrafted my research proposal, which is the template for the present study. To hone my skills in qualitative research design and conduct, I read extensively in the literature on to get a knowledge of the steps involved in data collection and analysis, and reporting research findings.

In my tenure at ULSHB, I teach translation at undergraduate level. I observed over the years that translating idiomatic expressions (FL-L2) poses particular difficulties to EFL undergraduate students. This first-hand observation prompted me to investigate whether my suspicions as to specific difficulties in translating English

idioms into French (L2) are rooted in facts that lend themselves to exploration and explanation.

Translation features prominently in the curriculum. The subject makes a teaching unit (TE) divided into two complementary modules called generalised and specialised translation. Class time allocated to each sub-subject (generalised or specialised) is two hours a week over the academic year.

Translation is often seen as a testing tool for grammar and vocabulary of the language being learned. This approach presents the limitation of restricting translation to grammar and vocabulary. As pointed out by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972, p.16) ―It is important to define precisely its role in relation to grammar and vocabulary study‖[19]. The need for raising the profile of translation in SLA acquisition has been underlined in many places in literature. According to Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) translation difficulties can be fitted into three (3) categories: lexis, syntax and message, whereby message is the functional role fulfilled by utterance. This functional role is conveyed through a broad range of lexical items termed idiomatisms (phraseologisms) by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972). In-class translation activities are expected to raise students‘ awareness of translation problem areas and teach them the ways in which translation difficulties, including ready-made word combinations such as collocations and idioms, can be appropriately dealt with.

3.9 The Researcher's Role

Explaining the researcher‘s role, Foster (2006, pp. 73-77) distinguished four types of observer with regard to research purposes. These are (1) the ***complete observer (2)***, the ***observer as participant***, (3) the ***participant as observer***, and (4) the ***complete participant***. The distinguishing features of these different roles describe the varying

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[19]*il importe de bien definir sa place par rapport aux études de grammaire et de vocabulaire*(my translation)

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degrees to which the researcher is initially detached, become increasingly active, strongly involved, or fully immersed in observation setting and process. Each role above undoubtedly has its advantages and disadvantages. It falls beyond the scope of the present study to look at in detail at each role. This short account of the different roles assigned the researcher is to give the rationale for the researcher role that is selected in conducting the present study. Having teaching load and researching simultaneously at the research site (*ULSHB*) qualifies me as participant observer. Consequently, I will describe in some detail the participant as observer since this role best serves the purposes of my investigation.

According to Foster (2006), in this type of observation the researcher is more active, assumes a more participatory role, and is more unobtrusive because he is an insider (p.76). Since research participants perceive him as one of their own, he brings about less mistrust and reactivity from research participants, which creates strong interpersonal bonds with them. However, Foster (2006, p. 79) draws attention to the pitfalls lurking the researcher assuming this role: *the problematic relation between participant role and researcher role* (emphasis mine).

3.10   Negotiating and Gaining Access

Negotiating and gaining access to research site and participants posed no major problems since the research setting is the University (*ULSHB*) where the researcher has been teaching for some years. Consequently, written request for permission to access records was drafted and granted; and no restriction on selecting participants was imposed. In addition, research participants were made aware that they were participating in a research study, and that their anonymity would be ensured.

3.11   Data Collection Strategies

This exploratory case study was carried out through purposive sampling of participants and translation examination paper. Official translation curriculum and syllabus were collected, described and analysed for interpretation in the light of the research problem: the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions (English-French). In addition, translation tests through home assignment and real-life examination targeting idiomatic expressions were administered in focus groups to explore to what extent, if any, translating satisfactorily English idiomatic expressions is closely linked to adequate knowledge of translation strategies to employ and good command of target language (French) idiom repertoire.

Finally, questionnaires and interviews with students and key informant lecturers, and in-class observations were completed to ensure validity and reliability.

3.11.1   Translation assignment and examination

In conducting the study different types of data were collected and analysed to address the research problem: exploring the specific causes of the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduates in translating idiomatic expressions (FL-L2).

As an initial step in collecting evidence for evaluating learners' translation skills in idiomatic expressions, a written test was conducted in four three-year university level focus groups. The overall student population consisted of 211 respondents. Each group represented a mixed population of male and female students with similar proficiency in English. In the context of the education system of Mali, the students who took part in the test are advanced EFL learners, having completed at least 6 years of English, starting from secondary school (*lycée*). The test consisted of a text of 232 words containing 6 different idiomatic expressions, and was administered as a task-based, take-home, assignment

purposefully targeting idiomatic expressions identified by the teacher-researcher. The text was an authentic material entitled ―Desperate immigrants". It recounted the plight of immigrants trying to reach safe haven. The focus groups were assigned the translation 2 months before it was expected to be handed in. This flexibility allowed ample time for students to research and work out target idioms identified in the text. The source text and suggested translation for the test are annexed in the Appendix.

In a further step in data collection, two groups out of the four focus groups were put through a translation examination paper. The examination translation text consisted of an authentic English material. The text consisting of 190 words included one identified idiom (wolf down, translated in plain as *avaler rapidement*, one single non-identified and one repeated non-indentified targeted idioms.

The targeted idiomatic expressions were ***tighten belts*** and ***making ends meet (1-2)***. These idioms are categorised as (1) semantically transparent, and (2) analysable; for (1) their internal composition does not contain a word which is not present in present-day English lexicon (compare with *spick and span*), and (2) their overall meaning is amenable from comparison (conceptual metaphor). Furthermore, they have direct equivalents in target language (French).Time for examination paper was two hours, as laid down by university rules pertaining to examinations. One hundred and sixty-six (166) students took the examination paper. The examination translation text and its translation are annexed in the Appendix.

3.11.2   Questionnaires

3.11.2.1 Students

In July 2013, the researcher hand-administered four hundred (400) questionnaires to EFL undergraduate students in three university years[20]. Responses were obtained from respondents learning in all three university years participating in the research study. One hundred and eighty-seven (187) responses were collected from respondents. The return rate was 46.75 percent. According to Gillham (2000), 30 percent response rate for questionnaire is satisfactory, and more than 50 percent is good (p.14).

Fifty-two responses (twenty-eight percent) came from two-year undergraduates. One hundred and eleven (fifty-nine percent) responses were obtained from three-year undergraduates; the remainder twenty-four (thirteen percent) came from four-year undergraduate students. It should be noted that the response rate was not even across and within groups and across years of study. Three-year groups faired significantly higher (fifty-nine percent) as compared to four-year groups exhibiting a low return rate (thirteen percent). This glaring gap in return rate across groups is attributed to the lack of rapport with the final-year students and to the fact that end-year examinations were nearing. Students, therefore, were likely to skip school.

The questionnaires were distributed to students volunteering to complete them and return in a week's time. As evidenced by the percentage shown earlier, the return rate was not even across years of study. The bulk of the responses were received from three-year students, with fifty-nine percent of return rate. Test and translation examination were set at this level.

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[20]*DEUG* 2: diploma taken after two years at university*; Licence:* diploma taken after three years at university*; Maîtrise:* diploma taken after four years at university.

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The questionnaires were constructed with a focus on the overall importance accorded to translation in EFL acquisition, the difficulties students encounter in translation in general, and more specifically the challenging task of translating idioms. Students' perspectives on in-class translation activities and their self-assessment of their proficiency in translating idioms were highlighted. The questionnaires comprised twenty-five closed and open-ended questions. All questions and responses were written in English. Some respondents did not tick all applicable items or write down their views/arguments in the response box provided for that effect. This is noticeable at the level of DEUG 2. This can be accounted for by their lack of confidence in answering questionnaire items on idioms.

3.11.2.2 Lecturers

In late August 2013, questionnaires were constructed and emailed to five (5) lecturers who have translation on their teaching commitments. These questionnaires differed significantly in some respects from those constructed and administered to EFL students. There were, however, repeating, overlapping questions in the questionnaires administered to students and lecturers. Responses came from four (4) lecturers.

The questionnaires covered a number of questions such as translation difficulties and strategies for dealing with idiomatic expressions, student proficiency in translating idioms, language learning translation teaching and its constraints in the EFL context of the study. A key opening question was why translation features prominently on the curriculum throughout the university years.

3.11.3. Interview setting and schedule

All interviews with students took place in the University computer laboratory. To dispel the daunting feeling associated with the word *interview* for some interviewees, I decided to rephrase it by equating it with *purposeful conversation*

between two persons sharing a keen interest in translation difficulties. The interviews were cast as semi-structured, with students being introduced to the written questions to be asked. However, their sequence was not strictly adhered to, depending on the responses from individual interviewees.

Interview questions focused on the central questions of translation difficulties, idiom definition, recognition, and recreation in translation context; and importantly, the extent to which students are geared towards dealing with idioms that crop up in texts they work through in in-class translation tasks. The interviews lasted from 10 to 15 minutes and were held in English only, with occasional prompts and probes in French to get started or help out whenever an interviewee was stuck for a word. Illustrative idioms given by interviewees were commonly translated into the opposite translation direction to assess their mastery of the word combination and elucidate on the translation strategies they employed.

3.11.4 Interviews

3.11.4.1 Students

Upon completion of the hand-administered questionnaires to undergraduate students, their responses were encoded. Questionnaires were numbered one after another, marked with identifying encoding numbers, in accordance with the encoding procedure proposed by Sapsford and Jupp (2006). To illustrate the encoding procedure: the university-year or level was assigned the first two digits; the given group – two additional digits; and the individual student – the final two digits. Encoding was carried out before proceeding with interview construction and administration. This was done simultaneously with reading and subsequent preliminary analysis of the responses collected from students. This preparatory sorting-out of questionnaire data helped constructing the questions that will be asked

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of the respondent students. As a result, 30 students in all three levels participating in the study were selected for interviewing: 10 interviewees in each university year, ranging from *DEUG 2* to *Maîtrise*.

On completion, the audio-taped interviews were transcribed sequentially, as they were scheduled, starting with ***Deug 2*** and ending with final-year students, ***Maîtrise***. Interviewing spanned across three weeks, from late July to mid-August. The end audio-tape represents about 100 pages of interview transcripts.

3.11.4.2 Lecturers

In September 2013, two (2) interviews were held with 2 lecturers. The lecturer interviewees were among those four (4) who responded to the questionnaires they received by email earlier in August. The face-to-face interviews were intended to gain a better understanding of their insights into translation teaching, translation practice; and more specifically, how they approach idiom translation in their class activities.

The interviews took place as scheduled at their respective offices. They were cast as semi-structured, with the researcher having prepared beforehand a number of important questions to be covered. However, interviewing was not stringently sequential, linear, with the interviewees expressing their repeated ideas in disparate places. Overall, each interview lasted 30-40 minutes. As with students these interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

3.11.5 Document sources

The translation curriculum developed by the Department of English Language and the translation syllabus the Department recommends for the course have been collected. Their contents have been analysed for their relevance for the research problem: difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions into French (L2).

3.11.5.1 Translation curriculum

Translation teaching is guided by an authoritative curriculum adopted by the Department of English Language. This document sets forth the objectives, contents, and bibliography required for the course. The syllabus is fairly straightforward, with slightly graded objectives for different university years, ranging from *DEUG 1* to *Maîtrise.*

3.11.5.2. Translation syllabus

The recommended syllabus is a thin compendium of translated texts in both translation directions (English to French and French to English), intended for teachers and students alike. In line with his deeply-held view that translation is more of an art than science, the author richly supplemented the textbook with single words and idiomatic expressions. These single-lexical items and idioms can come in handy in building vocabulary. The syllabus, however, does not show how the model translations were arrived at.

3.11.6 Observations

The salient point has been stressed by Gillham (2000) that case study research characteristically draws its strengths and weaknesses from the use of detailed data collected from different sources (p.2). Gillham (2000) indicated that generally there is discrepancy between what people say, do, and what document sources and records point to. In-class observations were, therefore, conducted for gaining a fuller understanding of the natural environment of the research participants and their activities, to relate the observed events to my research problem: difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions (English-French).

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3.11.6.1 Direct observations

The in-class observations were conducted from January through March 2014.The direct observations involved two four-year focus groups and one key informant lecturer. The observations sessions followed the time tables scheduled for the two focus groups: two hours a week devoted to translation in each group.

My field notes for observation focused on the teacher, the learners, their activities and interactions in performing translation tasks, with a view to identifying typical translation passages containing idiomatic expressions, and the attention given to such occurrences in real translation context. Therefore, close attention was given to translation strategies employed for dealing with idiomatic expressions and, incidentally, collocations; for the borderline between the two linguistic units is not clear-cut.

The observation sessions were not audio or video-taped for fear that obtrusive recording devices might have prompted increased reactivity of the participants, with the consequent distortion of the overall picture.

3.11.6.2 Participant observation

My participant observation was largely limited to my interactions with research participants. The teacher formally introduced me to the focus groups, stating on the onset that my research topic is the special category of word combination termed idiom. The teacher added pointedly that the direct observations the focus groups were participating in would be used in the case study I was conducting. Therefore, he stressed the need for focus and active involvement in the process.

In fact, creating and developing rapport with research participant students posed no particular difficulty, for a few attended my translation classes at some lower level, starting from first year to third year. Despite the obvious benefits of this rapport

for gaining acceptance by students and causing little reactivity, it presented a clear disadvantage. In effect, there was great temptation for some of the students to seek my opinion on alternative translations that were discussed in the process of translating. I reluctantly got involved in any translation-solving decision, pointing out that my observer participant role does not allow direct involvement in translation-decisions. At the initial stage of my observations, however, I temporarily stepped into the position of the teacher when he stepped out.

3.11.7   Data presentation

Multiple data have been collected in conducting the study. All data obtained have been stored, processed, and analysed focusing on answering the primary and subsequent research questions. As noted in previous chapters, the present study is designed as a qualitative investigation, which, in the words of Gillham (2000) draws its strengths and weaknesses from multiple sources of data collected (p.6). The author underlines the point that different sources of evidence, (e.g. direct observation, questionnaire, interview, and records) may not be congruent; they, he emphasises, will lead to different directions (p.11). As a consequence, the researcher should not discard evidence that contradicts his emerging ‗theories‘. Instead, he should strive to take into account the ‗discrepancy‘ displayed by multiple-source evidence to get a complex, ‗mixed‘ picture of the case being studied. Therefore, data collected from research participants were triangulated by source (students, lecturers) and method (questionnaire, interview, documents) for each research question.

In this section my approach is to first present sequentially the documentary sources (translation curriculum and syllabus) collected, then to analyse them with a view to assessing their relevance for the leading research question: specific causes of

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the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduates in translating idiomatic expressions (English-French).

Second, the interviews conducted with research participants and questionnaires completed by them will be looked at to answer the research questions. Observational data and translation test will bring the data presentation to conclusion.

Translation outputs obtained from these sources will be looked at focusing on idiom translation difficulties and strategies employed by students and the typical idiom translation errors they make. Questionnaire data have been computer-processed, whereas participant interviews, direct classroom observations, and data collected from translation test have been manually processed following the data analysis procedure set forth by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003).

3.11.8 Data analysis

According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), the sheer mass and diversity of data collected during interview and questionnaire can be overwhelming for the researcher (p.32). Therefore, they emphasised the need for him to structure the data obtained, using coding, into recurrent patterns or categories that can ultimately lead to a ―theoretical narrative‖. Coding, in the sense of Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), is a basic interrelation of disparate pieces of evidence into an emerging theory (p.31). Explaining the steps involved in analysing qualitative questionnaire, they compare the process with a staircase taking the researcher upward: ―the lowest level is the raw text and the highest level is your research concerns‖ (p.35).

Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) differentiated six steps in elaborating an abstract account from text. These consecutive steps are subsumed to three basic phases as follows:

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I.   MAKING THE TEXT MANAGEABLE

1. Explicitly state your research concerns and theoretical framework.

2. Select the relevant text for further analysis. Do this by reading through your raw text with Step 1 in mind, and highlighting relevant text.

II.   HEARING WHAT WAS SAID

3. Record repeating ideas by grouping together related passages of relevant text.

4. Organize themes by grouping repeating ideas into coherent categories.

I.   DEVELOPING THEORY

5. Develop theoretical constructs by grouping themes into more abstract concepts consistent with your theoretical framework.

6. Create a theoretical narrative by retelling the participant's story in terms of the theoretical constructs. (p. 43)

The data coding procedure above was adopted to look at the interview transcripts with a view to relating the personal experiences recounted by participants to the research problem: causes of the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate learners in translating idiomatic expressions into French (L2).

The interview transcripts obtained have been stored, processed, and analysed manually, focusing on the research questions. The overall interpretation of data is focused on thematic units of analysis, including translation difficulties, defining idioms, strategies for idioms, exposure to idioms, what can be done to improve EFL learners' skills in idiom translation, and the importance of translation in EFL acquisition. Since the study sought to explore the specific causes of the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions (EFL-L2), constructing a ‗theoretical narrative' received no attention.

Instead, emphasis has been put on identifying typical difficulties in translating English idioms into French. To treat comprehensively (triangulate) the research questions, the findings gained from interview data complement the analysis and

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conclusions obtained from content-analysis of documents (curriculum and syllabus) in addition to questionnaire and observational data.

Summary

This chapter presented the study design, the research tools used for data collection, to address the research problem: exploring the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions (English-French). The data collection instruments were devised to ensure triangulation: (1) by method (questionnaires, interviews, direct observations, and tests), and (2) source (lecturers, students, documentary sources). As pointed out by Foster (2006, p.89) ―Triangulation is more a direct check on the validity of observations by crosschecking them with other sources of data." Therefore, the study drew on five main sources for obtaining relevant evidence: questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, official translation curriculum and syllabus, and translations administered as part of a test and real-life examination.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter restates the research questions posed earlier and attempts to answer them utilizing detailed collected data.

4.1 Research Question 1

The study is guided by the primary research question (1): What are the specific causes of EFL undergraduate student difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions?

4.1.1 Translation as a teaching unit

From the onset, it is appropriate to look at translation in the broader context of university subjects at*Université des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako* (*ULSHB)*. The questionnaire administered in July 2013 included responses from 187 student participants,who came from three different university years. The questionnaire sought to explore the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translatingidiomatic expressions (FL-L2). The following table lists five subjects ranked in order of importance byrespondent students.

Table 1. **University subject ranking**

SUBJECTRESPONDENT		YEAR			
		DEUG 2	LICENCE	MAITRISE	Total
GRAMMAR	Count	15	43	7	65
	%	28.80%	38.70%	29.20%	34.80
TRANSLATION	Count	17	27	11	55
	%	32.70%	24.30%	45.80%	29.40%
LINGUISTICS	Count	1	9	1	11
	%	1.90%	8.10%	4.2%	5.90%
AFRICAN LIT.	Count	1	10	0	11
	%	1.90%	9.00%	0.00%	5.90%
PHONETICS	Count	4	4	0	8
	%	7.70%	3.60%	0.00%	4.30%
TOTAL	Count	38	93	19	150
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The general listing completed by respondents contained 16 subjects taught from *DEUG* 2 to *Maîtrise*.For data analysis, my attention is exclusively focused on

the first 5 most important subjects garnering 4 percent and above in the overall ranking established by participant students.

Looking at Table 1, one can form the impression that relative strong statistical evidence indicates that 34.80 percent of EFL undergraduates rely on grammar, followed by translation with 29.40 percent for English language learning. This strong tendency for students to rate grammar highest should be examined more closely at the light of clear upward tendency for more advanced students (*Maîtrise*) to depend on translation, in relative terms.

In fact, Table 1 shows a rise in translation ranking among respondents at final-year level, with 45.80 percent. Similarly, the results exhibited by final-year students reveal a correlation between interest in grammar and translation: the higher translation the lower grammar, as compared to other groups responding to the questionnaire.

To take this correlation comparison a step further with three-year students (*Licence*), they ranked grammar higher, showing 38.7 percent, and translation lower, with 24.30 percent. By contrast, DEUG 2 ranking of translation and grammar is congruent with final-year students', with translation showing 32.70 percent and grammar 28.80 percent.

Unlike Table 1 above displaying the importance of translation relative to other university subjects, the following questionnaire item in Table 2 was designed as a scale-based assessment seeking to make sense of how EFL undergraduate students rate translate per se.

Table 2**. Translation on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)**

		DEUG 2	YEAR LICENCE	MAITRISE	Total
1. Very bad	Count	2	6	0	8
	%	3.8%	5.4%	0%	4.3%
2. Bad	Count	0	3	0	3
	%	0%	2.7%	0%	1.6%
3. Not so good	Count	4	6	1	11
	%	7.7%	5.4%	4.2%	5.9%
4. Good	Count	10	34	5	49
	%	19.2%	30.6%	20.8%	26.2%
5. Very good	Count	36	62	18	116
	%	69.2%	55.9%	75.0%	62.0%
Total	Count	52	111	24	187
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2 confirms the trend observed in Table 1, with two-year and final-year participant students attaching greater importance to translation. They report highest satisfaction (5 points) with translation, exhibited by 69.2 percent and 75.0 percent of respondents, respectively. The Table also reveals a significant gap-narrowing in the assessment of translation by students across the board. For example, it emerged from Table 1 that three-year students ranked grammar higher than translation. By contrast, Table 2 shows that the most part of respondents in this university-year rank translation very high (5), with 55.9 percent of respondents involved. On average, translation is ranked very high by the bulk of respondents, with 61.5 percent.

This finding should be contrasted with the widely held opinion among informant lecturersthat translation is not very popular with EFL learners. ―Whenever you have the exams" one key informant (AK-1) said, ―translation is seen as the students' … not their pet but their pet aversion. The grades in translation go anywhere from 14 maximum to 0.5 minimum. You are not likely to see 16 or 17 or 20 in translation."

In conclusion, translation is difficult for learners, but highly ranked by them.

4.1.2   Translation direction: English-French vs. French-English

Evidence from several sources indicates that research participants are in general agreement that translation, regardless of directionality, can be instrumental in achieving high proficiency in both languages, for communication skills are enhanced as a result of vocabulary enrichment.

In EFL acquisition, respondent students attach greater importance to translation from English (FL) into French (L2), primarily because of the widely held belief that translation in this direction can be an efficient tool for achieving greater language proficiency. Data indicate that 61.5 percent of all respondents think that translation (English-French) can be efficient aid to English language learning. The utmost importance given to translation (FL-L2) as an efficient tool for EFL learning is particularly discernible as students move up the ladder of language learning, with 44.2 percent of respondents in *DEUG* 2, 65.8 percent in *Licence*, and 79.2 percent in *Maîtrise*(see Table 3 below).

The oppositetranslation direction (L2-FL) shows a decrease in the potential benefit students responded can be gained from translation in language acquisition, with 51.9 percent, including all university-year students participating in the study. As with English-to-French translation direction displaying increasing positive impact of translation on foreign language acquisition (FLA) as students move upnearcompleting their studies, French-to-Englishtranslation is upwardly counted as beneficial, ranging from *DEUG* 2 with 42.3 percent, *Licence*showing 54.1 percent, and *Maîtrise*exhibiting 62.5 percent. It should be noted, however, that the gap in opinions between English-to-French and French-to-English translation potential benefit in language learning is narrow, 9.6 percent.

For the most part students participating in the interview generally accepted that translation can be beneficial in language acquisition at large, expanding vocabulary in particular. Translation is pervasive, for English is being used to teach different university subjects. This is a kind of translation. ―When we are using English it is like in translation because we need to understand things from another language into our native language, so we are translating all the time." explained a final-year male student (24-26, MD7).

All key informant lecturers are in full agreement that translation can be instrumental in achieving higher proficiency in English. For example, a key informant (AK-1) highlighting the importance of translation said ―Translation can be helpful as a means of learning English at least, which is a foreign language here [Mali].If you know that you are learning something and this thing is in high demand by the population, and it can give a meaning to the teaching of English by having to translate all the time."

Translation difficulty with regardto directionality (English to French vs. French to English) is the first key question that has been asked in the data collection, and looked at to pinpoint the underlying difficulties in translation in general. In designing and conducting the research study, I proceeded from the assumption that translation (English-French) poses fewer difficulties to EFL learners, as their habitual medium of instruction is French from the beginning of their formal schooling. Therefore, learners are presumably more advanced in this language.

This underpinning assumption has been, however, questioned in part by questionnaire data collected from participant students. While there is general consensus among participant students and informant lecturers that translation is of

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paramount importance in foreign language acquisition, they diverge sharply with respects to translation directions (English-French or French-English).

Table 3. **Translation direction and difficulty**

DirectionRespondent		YEAR			Total
		DEUG 2	LICENCE	MAITRISE	
English into	Count	28	69	16	113
French	%	53.8%	62.2%	66.7%	60.4%
French into	Count	24	42	8	74
English	%	46.2%	37.8%	33.3%	39.6%
Total	Count	52	111	24	187
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

From what has been shown above in Table 3, most respondents, 60.4 percent, find that translation (FL-L2) is easier than translation into the opposite direction (L2-FL). Almost two-thirds of all students think that translation from English (FL) into French (L2) is easier than the opposite translation direction (L2-FL).

An analysis of data obtained through questionnaire showed that a significant proportion of respondents, 39.6 percent, hold the view that translation from French into English is easier. This is strong statistical evidence and it clearly indicates that respondents' level of confidence in their French-English translation skills is expected to decrease as they progress in university year. For example, student participants in *DEUG* 2 report 46.2 percent, whereas respondents in *Licence* show a lower degree of confidence, with 37.8 percent, while the level of confidence shown by final-year students edges above one-third, 33.8 percent of respondents.

Respondents' assessment of translation direction difficulty (English-French vs. French-English) as evidenced by the strong showing 39.6 percent for French into English translation direction in Table 3 became a recurrent debatable point that was further investigated in detail in interviews with participant students and lecturers.

The wide claim among questionnaire respondents, at closer look, has no reasonable foundation. In fact, respondent lecturers strongly argue against this perception of students' skills in translationfrom French into English (L2-FL).

This discrepancy observed in the data obtained with the help of questionnaire and further informationgathered from interviews with students and lecturers can be accounted for by the inappropriate self-assessment of respondents, predominantly in DEUG 2. One explanation given in interview by a couple of participants in DEUG 2 to support their assessment is that they have a richer vocabulary in French, thus their understanding of the source text is comparatively better. While understanding the source text is unquestionably important in translation, writing in target language is equally crucial. In this regard, all participant lecturers point to the fact that skills in French-to-English translation of the overwhelming majority of students are poor. Questioning the perception among significant numbers of student participants that translation (L2-FL) is easier than translation (FL-L2), one key informant (AK-1) remarked ‒most people who said this, maybe they are not aware or they do not have a clear-cut idea about their own performance. Teachers are in a better position to tell which one is easier."

4.1.3   Document sources

The translation curriculum developed by the Department of English Language and the translation syllabus it recommends for the course have been collected. Their contents have been analysed for their relevance for the research leading question: what are the specific causes of EFL undergraduate student difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions into French.

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4.1.3..1Translation curriculum

Translation teaching is guided by an official curriculum adopted by the Department of English Language. This document sets forth the objectives, contents, and bibliography required for the course. The curriculum is fairly straightforward, with slightly graded objectives for different university years, ranging from *DEUG* 1 to *Maîtrise*[21]. At *DEUG* 1 level (first year), for example, the current translation syllabus (2008) seeks to:

- Enable learners to acquire mastery of syntax, semantics, and stylistics of French and English.

- Enhance student skills in translating fairly simple texts from French into English and vice versa.

- Expose students to a moderate variety of vocabulary on different aspects of life in Africa, Europe, and America.

The contents of the curriculum show a list of four sentence types and sentence structures in both French and English. Suggestions are made for starting off with simple texts on African, European, and American cultures. Last, translation materials to be used for achieving the set objectives are sourced from Malian, African, French-speaking and English-speaking countries.

The curriculum suggests employing three main methods for translation activities: (1) home-assigned tasks, (2) in-class translation activities when students exchange their translation copies for peer correction; (3) sight translation, with the teacher dictating a text to students for them to translate without preparatory work. Next, their translations are collected and exchanged for peer correction in class.

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[21]DEUG 1: *diploma taken after one year at university*; DEUG 2= *diploma taken after two years at university; Licence= diploma taken after three years at university; Maîtrise = diploma taken after four years at university.*

The bibliography lists the following works: ‗Building Better English" 10 and 12, *Livre de grammaire française*, Practical English Grammar, *livres des différentes littératures étudiées, journaux français ou en anglais, Dictionnaires bilingues (*Longman, Harraps, Robert).

These contents of generalised translation for first-year students remain, to a great extent, unchanged up to *Maîtrise*, with the same grammar points covered throughout university years. It is noteworthy that two important differences appear between *DEUG* 1 and *Maîtrise* in that, teaching idioms is clearly stated, and translation activities are suggested to be graded, based on a wider variety of text types.

In dealing with the second component of translation, specialised translation, the curriculum (2008) reiterates the same objectives set for generalised translation, with a particular emphasis that ―specialised translation seeks to enhance learner skills in translating into French or English texts to do with socio-professional domains likely to employ students on completing their study." Text types include, but not limited to, business, management, administration, sciences and technologies. As a consequence, the recommended bibliography is markedly different[22] from the one suggested for generalised translation.

It is not surprising that an *auxiliary domain of linguistics*, to use the phrase of Vinay and Darbelnet (1972), such as translation is high on the curriculum guiding the teaching of English as a foreign language. Translation, as it has been noted in the background to the study, does not pave the way for a diploma per se. The official curriculum, however, recognises explicitly that high proficiency in translation skills can be beneficial at job entry.

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[22]Livres de commerce, livres de correspondance administrative, Letter writing,Business English

Stressing the need for students to be geared with high skills in translation raises the question how recommended course curriculum and syllabus relate to the broad objective of teaching translation in general, and idiomatic expressions in particular, insofar that these set word combinations are readily found in different text types and pose particular difficulties in translation.

At scrutiny, it is rather disconcerting that no authoritative books are listed in the bibliography likely to guide translation teachers in attaining the otherwise clear objectives of moulding graduates into would-be-translators. There is glaring discrepancy between the set objectives and contents: curricular analysis shows unambiguously that translation teachers are referred to no specialised literature on translation. Translation theory is completely overlooked. Inadequate bibliographical foundation for translation adversely impacts the perception of the course. This can bring about or reinforce the misconception that the discipline lacks central theoretical concepts and practical pedagogical tools for overcoming translation difficulties, e.g. grammatical, lexical and pragmatic, encountered by learners at different language learning levels.

Therefore, the gap between the objectives and contents should be bridged by gearing translation teaching to theoretical and practical issues in the field. Thus, the subject will be approached as a university course in its own right. Conversely, it seems to me that the focus placed on grammar over vocabulary in the curriculum is a return to the grammar-translation method, which has been strongly criticised by translation theorists (Vinay & Darbelnet,1972; Catford, 1965; Cook, 2001; Munday, 2008). Seen from the grammar-translation method approach, translation is more of a tool for testing learners' proficiency in grammar and vocabulary. As pointed out by translation theorists (Retsker,1982; Newmark, 1991) the discipline should be viewed

as an effective tool for raising the linguistic awareness of learners through contrastive approach to similarities and differences between their language pair.

4.1.3.2 Translation syllabus

In the foreword to Translation Texts for Freshmen, Gueye (2008[23]) from the onset points to his reluctance to theorising on translation. This reluctance stems from the deeply held assumption that practice makes a translator. Good translation, Gueye (2008) stresses, comes from good reading. He explains that, incidentally, the task of translating becomes more challenging when interpreting [spoken translation] is performed. While acknowledging the linguistic permutations and cultural adaptations involved in interlingualtranslation, Gueye (2008) provides no theoretical concepts underpinning the translation strategies that teachers and students can employ for achieving good translation.

As previously indicated, the recommended syllabus is a thin compendium of translated texts in both translation directions, intended for teachers and students alike. In line with his strong view that translation is more of an art than science, the author richly supplemented the textbook with single words and idiomatic expressions. These single-lexical items and idioms can come in handy in building vocabulary. Gueye (2008), however, does not show how the translations in the syllabus were arrived at. The syllabus, therefore, falls short of identifying and overcoming translation difficulties such as lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic with their implications for translation teaching and practice.

Not overemphasising the enlargement of vocabulary, the syllabus would be certainly more useful in dealing with translation teaching if it delved into attested

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[23] Unpublished booklet aimed at translation teachers and students

translation strategies with their consequent application to case examples for teachers and learners to take their cues.

Writing on ―translation from L2 to L1", Newmark (1991, p.61), by contrast, stressed the point that ―the distinction between word-for-word and global meaning of idioms and standard collocations has to be made." Failing to raise awareness of and provide any theoretical guidance as how to cope with translation difficulties as described above, the specific difficulty of idiom translation, among other translation difficulties, facing EFL learners remains unsolved on close reading of the syllabus.

4. 1.4 Analysis and discussion of interviews with students

This section analyses the information obtained from the interviews conducted in three university levels with EFL learners participating in the study. The resulting transcripts have been analysed in accordance with the qualitative data processing procedure set forth by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). A qualitative inquiry, as indicated earlier, draws on multiple sources for achieving reliability and trustworthiness (Gillham, 2000). Interviewing is one of the tools used to gain in-depth insights into the research questions from the participants' perspectives.

According to Wilson and Sapsford (2006), interviewing can be conducted in different formats, depending on research setting and purpose. Wilson and Sapsford (2006) distinguished four main basic types of interviewing: face-to face- interviewing using an interview schedule, the telephone interview, postal questionnaires, and face-to-face interview in a free format (pp.93-94).

While the first three interview types have their comparative advantages, the latter is more appropriate for conducting the present study. In fact, it has the advantage of allowing free expression of participants' concerns and the possibility for the researcher to delve deeper into aspects that are not well illuminated through

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classroom observation and questionnaire. Reiterative probing and prompting can give interviewing an edge that other information gathering tools lack. By necessity, interviewing is complementary to direct observation and questionnaire, as pointed out by Gillham (2000).

4.1.4.1 Translation difficulties

Evidence collected from questionnaire and interviews with research participants are congruent that translation difficulties experienced by EFL learners can be broken down to two broad categories: translation direction (FL-L2 versus L2-FL) and lexicogrammatical difficulties in translation.

4.1.4.1.1 Translation direction

Translating from English into French (FL-L2) presents fewer difficulties to EFL learners because of higher proficiency in French, as compared to translatinginto the opposite direction (L2-FL). As a matter of fact, learners are immersed into French as a medium of instruction from the very beginning of their formal schooling. As one male interviewee (24-26, 1) put it, ―we are more advanced in French"(see Table 3 forcomparative figures).

In stark contrast, most respondents find that translating from French into English (L2-FL) is more challenging because of limited vocabulary. This generally accepted view should be contrasted with the views expressed by few two-year students. According to them, French-English translation is easier than English-French because of better understanding of the source text (see Table 3 for Translation direction and difficulty).

4.1.4.1.2 Lexicogrammatical difficulties

In addition to translation direction difficulty (FL-L2 as opposed to L2-FL), grammar and vocabulary pose specific challenges to EFL learners. Therefore, I will

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discuss at length these two aspects separately, under two distinct subheadings: grammar and vocabulary. The following table shows the level of difficulty posed by grammar and vocabulary reported by questionnaire respondents.

Table 4. **Lexicogrammatical difficulties in English-Frenchtranslation**

DIFFICULTYRESPONDENT		DEUG 2	YEAR LICENCE	MAITRISE	Total
. Vocabulary (collocations, idioms, proverbs, set expressions, etc.)	Count	45	100	20	165
	%	86.5%	90.1%	83.3%	88.2%
Grammar	Count	7	11	4	22
	%	13.5%	9.9%	16.7%	11.8%
Total	Count	52	111	24	187
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

4.1.4.1.2.1 Grammar challenges

In Table 1 more than one-third, 34.80 percent, of all questionnaire respondents reported that they rely more on grammar for English language learning. By contrast, grammar poses no real difficulties in translation context. Only 11.8 percent of respondents agree that grammar is a challenge to them in translation. The vast majority of participant students, 88.2 percent, clearly see vocabulary as more intractable in translation. These views are not contradictory. They simply reflect the importance of grammar in relation to other university subjects and the level of difficulty posed by vocabulary compared to grammar in translation context.

There is, however, discrepancy between data collected with the help of questionnaire and interview. In the former source, final-year participants indicate higher rate of grammar-related difficulties in translation, with 16.7 percent against lower rates in *DEUG* 2 and *Licence*. In interview, final-year students unequivocally downplayed the importance of grammar-related difficulties in translation. In fact, final-year students are expected to have mastered the grammar points covered in

curriculum throughout the years of learning. Accordingly, their perspective on grammar is significantly different from, for example, two-year learners', who are learning English grammar ‗seriously', to borrow the phraseused by a two-year female student. This learner expressed her view of learning English in earnest at university level after she had smatterings of English at secondary school (*lycée*). A handful of two-year students pointed tenses and the gerund as particularly challenging in translation.

A short account of tenses and the gerund points to dissimilarities in tenses between English and French in translation context; and the translational transformations in rendering the gerund are limitless in French. More advanced learners (three and four years) may have come to realising that grammatical systems such as tenses in translation do not parallel in the language-pair (English-French). As pointed out by Salkoff (1999, p.55) ‒There is no simple correspondence between French and English tenses, so that the translations based on syntax will in any case be approximate. These translations could be improved by making use of semantic-based criteria."

Furthermore, translation theorists (Vinay & Darbelnet,1972) have shown through the translation procedure they termed transposition how grammar parts can be substituted with lexical items. In the words of Newmark (1991, p.85), the gerund is the ‒most neglected transposition". There is no set limit on the changes the gerund can be inflected with in translation from English into French. However, a rough rule of thumb is to translate the category with substantive, verb, adjective, clause, and present participle. For illustration sake, let us look at the translation behaviour of the gerund in the following passage extracted from Hamid (2007, p.19), ‒Do you see those girls, **walking** there, in jeans speckled with paint? Yes, they *are* attractive. And

how different they look from the women of that family **sitting** at the table beside ours, in their traditional dress."

*Voyez-vous ces filles, **qui marchent** là-bas, en jeans tacheté de peinture. Oui, elles sont séduisantes. Et comme elles paraissent différentes des femmes de cette famille, **assise** à la table voisine, dans leur tenue traditionnelle.*

As can be seen in these occurrences, the gerund form is translated with a clause and an adjective respectively.

4.1.4.1.2.2 Lexical difficulties

Questionnaire and interview data are in congruence that lexical difficulties are more important than grammatical ones. In the broad category of lexis, set word combinations such as collocations, idioms and fixed expressions, and proverbs are more difficult than free combinations or single-lexical items.

For most interviewees idioms and proverbs are seen as falling into the same subset. The marked similarity in translation strategies (equivalent, correspondent, paraphrasing) employed for tackling idioms and proverbs in translation undoubtedly makes matters more confusing for EFL learners. The fundamental linguistic differences between idioms and proverbs are not grasped. Illustrative examples given by interviewees to substantiate the point speak for themselves. Generally these examples are rather proverbs such as *birds of the same feather fly together.

Moreover, the respondents who gave these examples of idioms, or proverbs for that matter, most often failed to translate them accurately. This poor knowledge of idioms, in French, at least, is closely related to the extent to which EFL learners employ correspondence as a translation strategy for idioms. Poor knowledge of equivalent idioms shall be discussed in further detail in the appropriate section.I shall show in my analysis and discussion of the translation sequences obtained

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fromstudents and the frequency of translation strategies they apply that the accurate use of correspondentsis indicative of adequate knowledge of idiom repertoire in target language (French), whereas theappropriate use of equivalents is more closely bound with a knowledge of translation techniques.

Looking at the evidence collected from questionnaire it will be seen that 73.3 percent of participant learners report limited knowledge of translation equivalents of idioms in French. In decomposing the specific causes of idiom translation difficulties into four categories, this kind of difficulty comes second, just after the specific difficulty in identifying idioms in source text, with 77.5 percent.

While idioms and proverbs share in common features such as ready-made reproduction in utterance and full or partial transferred meaning (metaphorical or metonymic), a basic distinction should be drawn between them on structural and semantic grounds. Gries (2008), for example, makes the important point that idioms are structurally limited to function as part of a sentence or clause (p.33). Proceeding from a narrower perspective on phraseology, Alifirenko and Semeneko (2009) indicate that idioms are broadly categorised as fulfilling a referential, denotative function in utterance; while proverbs perform a communicative function. Put in other words, idioms *name* things, and proverbs *communicate* things. Proverbs and idioms can be easily mixed up and fairly difficult to translate from English into French. One final-year male student (24-26, 7) summed up the prevailing feelings among learners, ―we don‗t have the right manner to translate."

The research question (1) sought to identify the specific causes of EFL undergraduate difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions from English into French. Therefore, delimiting the concept of idiom from other borderline elements of formulaic language such as proverbs and saying is of utmost importance to avoid

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confusion. Two approaches emerged from data extracted from interview to defining the concept of idiom: linguistic definition and translation-based definition. First, let us examine the trend revealed in questionnaire data.

4.1.4.2 Defining idiom

Table 5. **Idiom definitions**

DEFINITIONRESPONDENT		DEUG 2	YEAR LICENCE	MAITRISE	Total
A set word combination that cannot be translated word for word.	Count	31	78	16	125
	%	59.6%	70.3%	66.7%	66.8%
A fixed word combination that can be rendered word for word.	Count	6	12	1	19
	%	11.5%	10.8%	4.2%	10.2%
Give a definition of your own, if any different from the above supplied.	Count	6	10	0	16
	%	11.5%	9.0%	.0%	8.6%
No answer	Count	9	11	7	27
	%	17.3%	9.9%	29.2%	14.4%
Total	Count	52	111	24	187
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Questionnaire data on idiom definition point to real difficulty experienced by student respondents in defining the concept of idiom. What is particularly noteworthy is that 14.4 percent of all respondents left unanswered the open-ended question asking them to give their own definition, if any different from the probing definitions provided by the researcher. The 14.4 percent non-response rate is the highest among all questionnaire items. On the other hand, 8.6 percent of all respondents gave a definition different from the ones supplied by the researcher. In sum, 78 percent of all respondents relied on the two definitions above described.

These definitions were deliberately translation-determined as they did not consider the linguistic approach to idiom definition, for the distinction is not easy to

make clear premised on linguistics only. Therefore, the question of idiom definition was further elucidatedin interviews conducted with participant students and lecturers.

4.1.4.2.1 Linguistic definition

Idiom has been defined by student interviewees from linguistic perspective. These definitions included: ―An idiom is an expression specific to a given language (see Le Petit Robert 2012[24] for similar definition); ―an idiom is a group of words or phrase with an established meaning". It should be noted that most students found it difficult to define the linguistic unit. Importantly, the definitions provided were unmistakably dictionary definitions. Those who gave the best linguistic definitions failed to identify idioms in translation context or they used inappropriate strategies for translating example idioms such as white elephant and glass ceiling that the researcherofferedto probe into their understanding of idiom.

4.1.4.2.2 Translation-based definition

Another approach to defining idiom is translation-based criterion. The concept of idiom has been defined as a word combination that cannot be translated word for word. Although most respondents, particularly in DEUG 2, repeated the definition givenin the questionnaire distributed to them, questionnaire data show that they are less comfortable with the linguistic construction. This suspicion of reaction to the interview is strengthened by learners' inability to illustrate their definitions, and articulate how to identify idioms in translation context. As noted earlier, two-year students gave the best definitions, although they performed worse on other scores such as giving examples in English or French, identifying idioms in translation.

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[24]*Ensemble des moyens d'expression d'une communauté correspondant à un mode de pensée spécifique.*

There is widespread confusion surrounding the concept of idiom. Some informants think that it is a natural, fluent, way of speaking. Others think that it is a specific way of thinking characterising a given language. The term idiom, in the sense of the study, is a linguistic unit ascribed a conventionalised meaning.

Overall illustrative examples of idiom include: (1) *It is just a piece of cake[25], for *it is like a piece of cake*; (2) *birds of same feather fly together, for ***birds of a feather flock together***, were given and translated by a final-year male student (24-26, AK5), *les oiseaux du même plumage volent ensemble.

In conclusion, the most part of interviewees failed to give an example idiom off the cuff, either in English or French, which raises the question of their familiarity with French idiom repertoire.

Idiom definition difficulty is not experienced by participant students only. To take an example, a key informant (AK-1) was at pains defining or coming up with an example of idiom. Asked to give a definition of the word idiom, he answered with the following ―Give me an example for idiom, I don't know (pause), to pass out." To put it straight, to pass out is a phrasal verb. In his words, culture is the most difficult part in translation. ―So culture influences, teachers are limited on that basis, plus some natural way of speaking." Thereupon, he recounted a first-hand anecdote in a restaurant in the USA, involving ―for here or to go?[26]"

Culture-bound words can be challenging in translation, although they can be always translated using adaptation strategies, as suggested by numerous translation theorists (Vinay and Darbelnet,1972; Newmark, 1988, 1991; Baker, 1992). In the case of ‗cultural equivalent', the functional role of the word involved is given priority, not its lexicogrammatical features.

As pointed out previously, there is a great deal of confusion surrounding the concept of idiom. Some respondents seem to consider idiom as a natural way of speaking; some others think of idiom as high fluency in language, the ability to

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[25] * asterisk is used to draw attention to an incorrect idiom.

[26]Another cultural word given is subway.

observe grammar constraints and usage rules of a given language. However, it is more appropriate to consider idiom as a set multi-wordcombination assigned semanticunity.

4.1.4.3 Difficulties in translating English idioms

Another way of looking at the first research question was to ask research participant students whether English idioms pose particular difficulties in translation. The following table summarises their answers to the question.

Table 6. **Difficulties in English idiom translation**

			DEUG 2	YEAR LICENCE	MAITRISE	Total
Yes		Count	43	107	16	166
		%	82.7%	97.3%	88.9%	92.2%
No		Count	7	2	0	9
		%	13.5%	1.8%	0%	5.0%
	Undecided	Count	2	1	2	5
		%	3.8%	9%	11.1%	2.8%
Total		Count	52	110	18	180
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In my analysis of idiom translation difficulties and strategies, I will rely on Baker's (1992) strategies for translating fixed expressions and idioms, for these strategies present the double advantage of being well elaborate and readily applicable.

The broad problem posed by English idiom translation is recognised by the overwhelming majority of all respondents, accounting for 92.2 percent. This wide problem-recognition has been further detailed and the difficulties have been allocated to 4 specific categories as follows:

(1) identifying idioms in source text,

(2) understanding idioms in source text,

(3) inadequate knowledge of equivalents in target language, and

(4) lack of knowledge of translation strategies for grappling with idioms that crop up in translation tasks.

Table 7. **Specific causes of the difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions as reported by students**

| DIFFICULTYRESPONDENT | | | YEAR | | | |
			DEUG 2	LICENCE	MAITRISE	Total
	Difficult to recognise, identify	Count	38	87	20	145
		%	73.1	78.4	83.3	77.5
	Difficult to understand without previous knowledge	Count	33	72	11	19
		%	63.5	64.9	45.8	62.0%
	Inadequate knowledge of translation equivalents in French	Count	43	82	12	137
		%	82.7%	73.9%	50.%	73.3%
	Lack of knowledge of translation strategies	Count	34	74	17	125
		%	65.4	66.7%	70.8%	66.8%
Total		Count				
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As can be seen from the table decomposing the process of idiom translation into 4 steps, the specific difficulties EFL undergraduate students experience in translating idiomatic expressions point to four interrelated categories such as difficulty to recognise or identify idioms in source text (English), with 77.5 percent of all respondents, inadequate knowledge of translation equivalents in French, 73.3 percent, lack of knowledge of translation strategies for dealing with idioms 70.8 percent, and difficulty in understanding idioms without previous knowledge, 62.0 percent. Questionnaire data content-analysis shows that the greatest difficulties arising in translation are clearly attributed to identifying idioms in translation process and poor knowledge of translation equivalents in target language. The two identified specific difficulties are at the core of translation process.

In literature, translation process has been described as understanding the source text and writing in the target text; understanding is important for translation, just as important as writing is. Failing to identify idioms as linguistic units ascribed a special meaning different from the additive meaning of its constituents, students will, by necessity, translate idiom occurrences word for word as they commonly would with free word combinations. As indicated by phraseologists and translation theorists,

polysemy features in idiomatic expressions, e.g. they have a literal and idiomatic meaning. Failing to comprehend the information conveyed in the idiomatic meaning is conducive to poor recreation in target text (French).

Furthermore, the difficulties in identifying and recreating idiomatic expressions in translation are closely related to the difficulty attributed to lack of knowledge of strategies for getting to grips with idioms. This difficulty has been highlighted by respondents, 70.8 percent, and aptly phrased by one final-year student, ―we don't have the right manner to translate."

Learning valid translation strategies for handling idiomatic expressions has everything to do with in-class translation activities, for theoretical foundations for this problem-solving exercise have been laid down by numerous translation theorists (Vinay and Darbelnet,1972; Retsker,1982; Baker, 1992).

Difficulty in understanding English idiomatic expressions without previous knowledge has been stressed by numerous respondents, 62.0 percent. In relation to the other three specific difficulties, this one is less serious, although very significant statistically. There is good reason to assume that EFL respondents reporting this difficulty cannot infer the meaning of idioms in translation context if they had no prior exposure to the idiom in question. Given the socio-educational environment of EFL learners, the odds are high against their coming across idioms in their extracurricular activities as compared to curricular activities, including translation and other university disciplines.

Questionnaire data collected from four informant lecturers point, however, to other specific difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduates in idiom translation.

Table 8. **Specific causes of the difficulties in translating idioms asreported by lecturers**

		RESPONDENT				
		Lecturer I	Lecturer II	Lecturer III	Lecturer IV	Total
Recognising idioms in the source text	Count %			1		1
Understanding idioms in the source text	Count %	1	1		1	3
Recreating idioms in the target text	Count %		1	1	1	3
Inadequate knowledge of translation equivalents in the target language				1		1
Lack of knowledge of translation strategies	Count %	1				1
Total	Count %					

A close examination of the table above derived from informant lecturer questionnaire data shows that two steps, understanding SL idioms and recreating idioms in TL, are the most severe specific difficulties in translating idioms for learners. Three-quarters of informant respondents linked these two steps to the most difficult part. Two respondents out of four found that limited knowledge of translation equivalents and lack of knowledge of translation strategies appropriatefor idioms can explain difficulties experienced by students in translating idioms. Only one informant in four clearly pointed out idiom recognition, identification, as a major difficulty for idiom translation.

By contrast, participant students indicated idiom recognition and limited knowledge of equivalents in TT as the two most intractable difficulties in dealing with idioms. This wide difference in idiom translation difficulty assessment evidenced between students and informant lecturers needs further explanation.

In dealing with idioms, the most part of respondent students report that they rely heavily on equivalent and literal paraphrase as translation strategies, 47.1

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percent and 35.3 percent respectively. Heavy dependence on literal paraphrase clearly indicates that the word combination being translated is not seen as a polylexical unit with transferred semantic unity. Failing to understand the semantic wholeness of idioms accounts largely for the strong tendency for EFL learners to rely on FL patterns of word-combination to translate literally. It emerged clearly from questionnaire data that informant lecturers do not employ literal paraphrasing to translate idioms, while the technique is widely used by participant students.

4.1.4.4 Exposure to idioms

Without cultural background and enabling extracurricular activities EFL learners have limitedexposure to idiomatic expressions. As one three-year female student captured the central issue of idiom translation difficulties, ˍI am poor in idioms and proverbs because they are not taught." Inadequate exposure to idiom is another element contributing to poor skills in idiom comprehension and subsequent translation. Questionnaire and interview data have revealed that learners have exposure to idioms intra and extra curriculum.

4.1.4.4.2 Curricular activities

In curricular activities, questionnaire data suggest a strong imbalance between translation exposure to idioms and other university subjects acquainting learners with idiomatic expressions. Only 27.3 percent of respondents agree that other university disciplines give them exposure to idiomatic expressions. By stark contrast, 72.7 percent depend on in-class translation activities for a knowledge of idioms. This strong statistical evidence points to the importance of translation activities in learners' exposure and handling of idiomatic expressions.

In sum, personal endeavour seems to outweigh inputs gained from university subjects. In many cases, student participants were not comfortable with idioms: low-frequency words, lack of exposure or cultural background. Importantly, even those students who were able to give some examples of idioms off the cuff failed to come up with their accurate translations. EFL students may be slow to find an English idiom to illustrate a point, still failing to give examples in their habitual language of instruction (French) raises the question of their familiarity with French idiomatic expressions.

Given that the lack of exposure to idioms is extensively cited by EFL undergraduates as a real difficulty in coping with the linguistic unit, it was appropriate to try to understand to what extent lecturers having translation commitments pay close attention to teaching proven strategies for idioms.

Table 9. **In-class idiom translation tasks**

IDIOM TRANSLATION			YEAR DEUG 2	LICENCE	MAITRISE	Total
	Yes	Count	33	80	20	133
		%	63.5%	72.1%	83.3%	71.1%
	No	Count	19	31	4	54
		%	36.5%	27.9%	16.7%	28.9%
Total		Count	52	111	24	187
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

4.1.4.4.1   Extracurricular activities

Almost all extracurricular activities, (including movies, radio shows, literature, social interaction, official documents) that may familiarise students with idiomatic expressions are rated below 50 percent by students for their inputin idioms. For a narrow majority of respondents reading exposure to idioms comes first, with 52.4 percent. Next, social interaction accounts for 36.4 percent, and radio shows and movies continue the list with 23.5 percent and 22.5 percent respectively. Official documents bring the list to a close with 22.5 percent.

It can be seen from Table 9 above that students overwhelmingly reported that close attention is paid to idiomsin translation classes. The lack of a systematic approach to translating idioms has been noted as a severe limitation of the translation curriculum and syllabus discussed earlier. The four translation strategies developed by Baker (1992) for dealing with idioms have been proposed to student respondents to get an idea of how they are acquainted with the theory and how they deal with idioms in translation tasks.

Table 10. **Translation strategies for idioms**

STRATEGYRESPONDENT		DEUG 2	YEAR LICENCE	MAITRISE	Total
Equivalent	Count	15	64	9	88
	%	28.8%	57.7%	37.5	47.1%
Correspondent	Count	18	23	7	48
	%	34.6%	20.7	29.2%	25.7%
Literal/paraphrase	Count	22	37	7	66
	%	42.3%	33.3%	29.2%	35.3%
Omission/avoidance	Count	1	6	3	10
	%	1.9%	5.4%	12.5%	5.3%
Total	Count				
	%	100,0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Adapted from Baker's model of strategies for idioms and fixed expressions)

4.1.4.5 In-class translation tasks

With no theoretical grounding into the linguistic construction of idiom (key features capturing the concept: ready-made reproduction, multi-word organisation, semantic unity, transferred meaning) and appropriate translation strategies as shown by the limited application they make of translation strategies (see Table 10 as above), EFL learners were frequently faced with idioms in translation class.

A rough rule of thumb suggested by teachers in class was to avoid word-for-word translation. Some idiomatic expressions, teachers would explain, have to be translated sense for sense based on the meaning inferred from close reading of the text to be translated. Still, replacing the whole idiomatic expression with a literalword (paraphrasing) and omission are widely resorted to by student respondents in translation assignments and papers. They employ literal or plain translation even if they have the gut feeling that _the plainword is not the accurate translation', according to a final-year male student(MD, 4.1).

Rendering a whole idiomatic expression in a single literal word brings us back to the concept of word-identificator described by Ch. Bally as the primary defining feature of phraseological unit (Kunin, 1996). The concept of word-identificator holds that an idiom has a functionally equivalent literal counterpart. This will be illustrated with the following examples (1) rainy day, literal equivalenthard times, (2) kick the bucket, literal equivalent die.

This view has been strongly contested by some linguists and phraseologists(Abeillé, 1995; Kunin, 1996). In particularKunin (1996)has pointed out the complex nature of idioms by emphasising that theyfill in a lacuna in language word-stock; therefore, a literal word cannot satisfactorily replace an idiom in utterance.

How the theory of idiom and literal word affects translation strategies has been debated by translation theorists (Retsker,1982; Baker, 1992). These authors seem in agreement that paraphrasing, in Baker's (1992) phrase, is an attested idiom translation strategy well documented. Moreover, Retsker (1982) writes that the translator, although knowledgeable of phraseology theory, should not concern himself with formal features of cross-linguistic phraseology correspondences.

On the other hand, contrastive phraseology studies (Sabban, 2007) made a valuable contribution to this open debate by indicating that asymmetry in phraseology systems allows literal translation of source-language idiom into target language. However, to resort to paraphrasing, emphasis should be put on the lack of real counterpart, and/or when literal word is best suited to translation context.

In dealing with strategies for idiomatic expressions a limited number of student interviewees tossed the terms equivalent and correspondent around, but they failed to explain the differences between the two translation techniques in relation to idioms. According to Garbovsky (2007), the striking difference between equivalence and correspondence lies in the following.With syntax, semantics, and pragmatics underpinning translation, correspondence may lack in syntax and semantics, focusing on pragmatics; while equivalence is primarily concerned with adhering to the semantic and syntactical features of the source text (ST). In other words, the thrust is put on semantics. Equivalence in translation is achieved at different linguistic levels including word, collocation, clause, and sentence. The overall equivalence of source text (ST) to target text (TT) is thus obtained through a combination of translation procedures, transformations. When the communicative effect is deliberately broken to convey just information, there is a good case for pragmatic transformation (Garbovsky, 2007). Pragmatic equivalence is achieved through

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translationaltransformations termed differently adaptation (Vinay & Darbelnet,1972), and dissimilar form and similar meaning (Baker,1992). Pragmatically determined transformations, according to Garbovsky (2007, p.395), are most appropriate for translating idiomatic expressions and culture-equivalents; syntactic and semantic patterns are changed partially or fully, but the communicative effect is achieved through different means.

Informant lecturers reported that they employ a combination of two techniques for coping with idioms in translation activities. Thus, it emerged from questionnaire data that they make wide use of equivalence and correspondence out of four strategies as described in Table 10 above. All informants responded that they use equivalence; and three-quarters indicated that they resort to correspondence. In sharp contrast to students reporting wide application of literal paraphrasing, 35.3 percent, no single informant lecturer uses literal paraphrasing or omission/avoidance.

It should be noted, however, that in interview one key informant (AK-1) suggested resorting to literal paraphrasing where equivalence and correspondence fall short. He explained that the meaning of the ST idiom should be inferred from context based on linguistic clues and rendered in plain, literal words. Another translation technique, he suggested, for idioms is to leave untranslated in brackets the intractable idiom, but he warnshis students, ―do not leave the blank, because the blank can stand for anything." Leaving the difficult unfamiliar idiom untranslated in TT, he commented, the marker will, at least, know that this is the *problem*.

The following table displays idiom teaching approaches adopted by translation teacher informants.

Table 11. **Approaches to teaching idiom translation asreported by informant lecturers**

			Lecturer I	Lecturer II	Lecturer III	Lecturer IV	Total
				RESPONDENT			
	Task-based translation of idioms	Count %	1	0	1	1	3
	As idioms occur in translations	Count %	1	1	1	0	3
	No or little attention	Count %	0	0	0	0	0
Total		Count %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%

From Table 11 above we can draw the conclusion that idiom translation in classroom activities is based on two approaches: the task-based approach, which consists in targeting idioms in purposefully selected translation materials. and another approach, equally practised by informants, is to deal with idioms as they occur in translation; no purposive sampling of texts containing idioms is carried out.

The first approach presents the advantage of taking a closer look at idioms and the combination of appropriate translation techniques to apply. The second approach is, by comparison, less satisfactory; for it has the disadvantage of not focusing on idioms as difficult structure in translation. Idioms are not approached as FLwhole units that should be given close attention in selecting course materials.

Commenting on their primary approach to dealing with idioms as they occur in translation process, two informants explained that when translating an idiom in classroom, they bring in similar thematic idioms, based on situation. This treatment of idioms, however, is teacher-oriented, for the examples are selectively given by the teacher who knows the translation equivalent or correspondent. How the equivalent and correspondent are achieved in translation context is not made clear to any extent to EFL learners.

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Fully aware that ―the more idioms they (students) have, the poorer the translation because they are far limited in terms of idioms", a key informant (AK-1) commented that the text ―can be simplified to suit learners". In this case, the difficult task of acquainting EFL undergraduate students with translating idioms is not tackled head-on; rather, it is circumvented.

Key informant questionnaire and in-depth interview data reveal that the overwhelming majority of informant lecturersare dissatisfied with their students' translation skills in idioms. When asked to mark students' performance on a four-item scale, ranging from (1) very dissatisfied, (2) dissatisfied, (3) very satisfied, to (4) undecided, three-quarters expressed dissatisfaction, while the last one said that he is very dissatisfied.

The widespread dissatisfaction reported by informant lecturers is attributable to two specific difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions. Informants clearly indicated two specific causes for explaining students' difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions into French. First, three respondents in four agree that learners fail to understand idioms in source text and recreate in target text. Second, two informants out of four expressed the view that learners lack equivalent idioms in TT and translation strategies for idiomatic expressions. Finally, only one informant in four stressed the key point of idiom recognition/identification difficulty for learners.

By comparison, recognising or identifying idioms is seen by learners themselves as the primary specific difficulty in idiom translation (see Table 7 for statistical evidence).

Table 12. **Specific causes of the difficulties for learners in translating idioms as reported by lecturers**

		Lecturer I	Lecturer II	Lecturer III	Lecturer IV	Total
Recognizing idioms In the source text	Count %			1		1
Understanding idioms in the source text	Count %	1	1		1	3
Recreating idioms in the target text	Count %		1	1	1	3
Inadequate knowledge of translation equivalents in the target language				1		1
Lack of knowledge of translation strategies	Count %	1				1
Total	Count %					

4.1.4.6 Difficulties in teaching translation

The specific causes of the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions were mostly apparent, so far, through content analysis of documents, questionnaire and interview data collected from students and lecturers participating in the study. Another important difficulty stressed on by key informants in interview is the teaching of translation in general. If the study is concerned with the difficulties EFL undergraduate students are faced with in translating idiomatic expressions into French, the question should arise as to the teaching of translation in the light of the research question (1). The difficulties specified so far are experienced by students.

By many accounts from lecturer informants, ̶teaching translation can be challenging for teachers too", as a key informant commented (GF-2). I will now turn my attention to this problem and see to what extent difficulties experienced by teachers relate to the first research question: specific causes of the difficulties

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encountered by EFL undergraduate studentsin translating idiomatic expressions into French.

Table 13. **Difficulties in teaching translation as reported by lecturers**

			RESPONDENT			
		LecturerI	Lecturer II	Lecturer III	Lecturer IV	Total
	Lack of structured official curriculum	1	1	1	1	4
	Lack of translation textbooks	1	1	1	1	4
	Translation as aid to FL acquisition	1	0	1	0	2
	Lack of motivation on the part of learners	0	1	0	0	1
	Specify, if any other	1	1			2
Total	% Count	%				
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%

What this table has shown is that all informant lecturersresponded that the lack of a structured official curriculum and translation textbooks are two major difficulties constraining the teaching of translation. In addition, interview data have revealed that teachers having translation on their teaching commitments lack theoretical grounding in translation theory and practice. Explaining how they first came to teaching translation, key informants indicated that they felt ―strong inclination, motivation for the matter". Faced with the shortage of specialist teachers in translation, they volunteered to teach the subject. ―Otherwise", one informant (AK-1) summed up the situation, ―teachers did not go to any academic field to learn translation; they don't know the methods and techniques about teaching translation."

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The wide variationsin translation materials available to each individual teacher of translation coupled with the lack of a clear academic purpose for translation activities has been noted by some informants as a real challenge. Difficulties such as above are increased with the ̶inexperience of students and lack of expertise and training of teachers themselves", according to another key informant (GF).

Summary and interpretation of findings on research question 1

An analysis of multiple-source data shows clearly that the specific causes of EFL undergraduate student difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions fall under two major categories: learner-dependent and teacher-dependent. On the one hand, for the most part of student respondents idioms are difficult to translate because they are difficult to recognise and understand in source text and recreate in target text.

Data obtained from informant students and teachers indicate that strategies for idiom translation are insufficiently taught and mastered by students, for they make limited application of them. On the other hand, teachers having translation commitments lack theoretical grounding in translation theory and practice; therefore, they can give little help with translating idioms. In addition, course curriculum and syllabus are not relevant for teaching translation in general and idiomatic expressions in particular.

4.2 Research Question 2

4.2.0 Introduction

The second research question is set as follows: what are the lexicogrammatical features of English idiomatic expressions in students' translation outputs? To answer the research question posed I focus my analysis on two complementary sourcesof data collected, students' productions in translation examination and observational translation passages. The section examines the lexical, grammatical and pragmatic characteristics featuring in the targeted English idioms, and identifies to what extent, if any, these characteristics are correctly recreated in students' target-text productions. The translation outputs collected from students were allocated to translation procedures adapted from Baker's strategies (1992) for idioms and fixed expressions (her terminology) as displayed in the following Table.

Table 14. **Strategies for idioms and fixed expressions**

STRATEGY
1. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form (Equivalent)
2. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form (Correspondent)
3. Translation par paraphrase (Literal/paraphrasing)
4. Translation by omission (Avoidance)
Total   **4**

Looking at the strategies listed in Table 14, it follows that idiom systems are not identical across languages. The section, therefore, takes a close look at typical grammatical and lexical forms shown in students' recreation of idiomatic expressions. The translation sequences have been statistically processed for identifying translationpatterns apparent in students' productions.

The analysis points to idiom translation strategies where literal paraphrasing features more predominantly than equivalent which in turn is more frequentthan correspondent. Omission and FL idiom transfer (leaving untranslated a source-text idiom in target text) translation strategies were widely employed by EFL students. The wide application of literal paraphrasing for dealing with idioms with similar form and meaning in target language (French) is revealing of the difficulty experienced by learners in recreating source-text idioms into target language (see Table 10 on previous research question).

4.2.1 Translation examination

In July 2013, two three-year groups were administered a translation examination. The translation text was drawn from an authentic English material[27] of general content, recounting the ripple effect of the current economic crisis in France. The text consisting of 190 words contained one identified idiom (wolf down, translated in plain as *avaler rapidement*, and idiomatically as *manger au lance-pierre),* one single non-identified and one repeated non-identified target idioms. Time for translation paper was 2 hours. No dictionaries were allowed.

The targeted idiomatic expressions were ***tighten belts*** and ***making ends meet (1-2)***. These idioms are categorised as (1) semantically transparent, and (2) analysable; for (1) their internal composition does not contain a word which is not present in present-day English lexicon (compare with *spick and span*), and (2) their overall meaning is amenable from comparison (conceptual metaphor). Furthermore, they have direct equivalents in target language (French) and are flexible enough to allow variants.

However, idiom use and translation, as noted by translation theorists (Retsker 1982; Newmark, 1988; Baker, 1992) is not dependent only on the existence of a

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[27] Chrisafis, A. (2008) ‗Au Revoir to Long Lunch as French Tighten Belts'. In News Lessons. Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

counterpart idiom in target language. These authors have noted that close attention should be paid to the stylistic dimension, register, and frequency of the counterpart in target language. This can reasonably give rise to translating in plain (literal paraphrasing) a source-text idiomatic expression.

4.2.1.1 Participants

One hundred and sixty-six (166) learners sat for the translation exam in July. These candidate learners came from two separate groups out of the four focus groups participating in the pre-test carried out earlier in April. The participants were all at advanced level in English learning. They were of similar proficiency in English, for they are taught the same subjects by the same lecturers. The student population was noticeably gender-unbalanced, with 26 female students andone hundred and forty male students.

4.2.1.2 Description of translation examination paper

Translation skills require learners to decode the lexicogrammatical patterns and pragmatic function of the foreign language text (English) and recreate faithfully the intended message into the target text (French). This process of rendering single words and word combinations falling into different categories is generally fraught with difficulties arising at lexical and grammatical level.

4.2.1.3 Targeted idioms

The analysis of the translation examination paper is based on two different idiomatic expressions: *tighten belts* and *making ends meet* (repeated).These targeted idioms are characterised as fairly transparent, flexible enough to allow variants and creative transformations; in addition, they have equivalents in the target language (French).

1.   ***Tighten belts***: when you say that somebody tightens his or her belt, you mean that this person is not financially secure and has to brace for economic hardship. So, the idiomatic expression is used to mean to spend less money than before.

(a)   The internal composition of the idiom presents different grammar parts: tighten belts =(verb+zero article+noun). According to Spears (2005, p.673), the idiomatic expression is flexible enough to allow variants such as **take** one's **belt in (a notch)** and **pull** one's **belt in (a notch).** Stylistically, though, English dictionaries do not assign the idiomatic expression to any particular language register (formal, colloquial, substandard).

(b) **Tighten belts** can be translated literally and figuratively, (literally, *se resserrer les ceintures*, idiomatically, *serrer la ceinture*. As is the case with the English idiom allowing a number of variants, the French equivalent can take the following forms: se *mettre, se serrer la ceinture, (faire) ceinture*; or *se serrer d'un cran, se mettre un cran à la ceinture*.

In the literature on idioms morphosyntactic deficiency has been identified as one feature characterising idiomatic expressions. It has been noted by numerous phraseologists that idiomatic expressions represent words or word forms that do not lend themselves to number contrast (singular vs. plural) as regular count word would do.This property is best illustrated with the translation of the title ‗Au revoir to long lunch as French tighten belts' My suggested translation reads ‗*Au revoir au long déjeuner car les Français* **serrent la ceinture**." In comparison, the internal structure of the idiom translated into French has: verb+singular definite article+noun in singular. The idiomatic feature of the expression becomesamply clearwith this noun in singular form as compared to the source-text plural noun (belts).Another important

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point has to be mentioned, the plural form of the noun (*les ceintures*) collates with the verb *resserrer* to give the literal meaning, se *resserrer les ceintures*.

2. Make ends meet is used to mean that somebody is left barely enough money after having provided for their basic needs. According to Ammer (1997, p.662), the expression originated as **Make both ends meet**, which is a translation from the French *joindre les deux bouts'*. Alternative accounts as to the etymology of the idiomatic expression exists in literature. The variant make both hands meet' can be readily found in literature and bears closer syntactic and semantic resemblance to present-day French equivalent *joindre les deux bouts'*. What is noteworthy about these equivalent idiomatic expressions is the stylistic markedness or lack thereof. *Le Dictionnaire Larousse Expression* (2002) has it: «Familier. *Joindre les deux bouts : parvenir avec peine à couvrir ses dépenses, à boucler son budget*.» The English idiom make ends meet' does not seem to carry explicit stylistic connotations.

4.2.1.2.2 Description of strategies for categorising students' translation outputs

The description of translation strategies used by students in recreating idiomatic expressions details five techniques for overcoming encountered difficulties in the process of translating.

1. **Equivalent idiom**. A working definition of equivalent idiom is any functionally restricted word combination ascribed a transferred meaning through image-bearing elements, with syntactic and semantic features that are paralleled in the target language.

2. A **correspondent idiom** is any functionally restricted word combination ascribed a transferred meaning through image-bearing elements that overlap in the target language. To make amply clearer the distinction to be made between equivalent and

correspondent idioms, let us look at the idioms under discussion: (1) tighten belts and (2) make ends meet.

1. Tighten belts (verb+zero article+noun) is translated as ***serrer la ceinture*** *(*verb+sing.definite article+noun*)*.

2. Make ends meet (verb+zero article+noun), which is translated as ***joindre les deux bouts*** *(*verb+plural definite articles+nouns*)*.

   Syntactic forms apparent through similar grammar parts and semantic meaning expressed with the help of similar lexical items are closely matched in equivalent idiomatic expressions in the language pair English-French. Furthermore, the counterpart French idioms fully preserve the conjured image conveying economic hardship.

   To exemplify the fundamental difference between equivalent and correspondent idioms, let us look more closely at the following textbook idiomatic expressions: kick the bucket, and put the cart before the horse

   1. Kick the bucket, *casser sa pipe (*the French idiom displays a cluster of synonyms that are not looked at here).

   2. Put the cart before the horse, *mettre la charrue avant/devant les bœufs*

   The examples above use different lexical items (kick for *casser,* the definite article the for the possessive adjective *sa* and bucket for *pipe*; cart for *charrue*, and horse for *bœufs*; while literally kick means *donner un coup de pied*, bucket is *seau*; on the other hand, cart is *charrette* and horse is *cheval*. Different lexical items and grammar parts are used for conveying the same functional meaning; therefore, these idiomatic expressions are best described as correspondents.

   In short, equivalent idiom is achieved by the student if his translation output contains similar syntactic and semantic features, and fills similar pragmatic or

functional role. A counterpart idiomatic expression is counted as correspondent if the translation relationship between ST and TT are not similar syntactically and lexically, but the functional or pragmatic role of the whole unit is preserved in translation.

3.   **Literal paraphrasing** is the instance of using plain lexical items for reproducing the whole idiomatic unit. The meaning is preserved, but the structure is broken up. Alternative, different, translations are strongly present in literal translation because of the varying combination of words used to render the ST idiomatic expression in literal paraphrase. This variation can be illustrated with the following idiomatic expression from the examination paper.

- make ends meet: idiomatic equivalent in Fr., *joindre les deux bouts*; paraphrasing: *boucler les fins de mois, se débrouiller.*

4.   **Omission or avoidance**, a translation strategy consisting of eliminating the source text idiomatic expression from the completed translation because the meaning of the ST idiomatic expression could not be inferred from close reading or linguistic clues from the text.

5.   **FL transfer or untranslation**, to take across unchanged the source-language idiom to the target text. Baker's strategies for idioms do not include FLtransfer into target text. This special kind of FL idiom transfer can be seen as an intermediate solution between plain translation and omission. A likely explanation for the use of this strategy can be the suggestion by some teachers to their students to write between brackets difficult words and idioms, but not to leave blanks, for these can mean anything.

4.2.2 Procedure and analysis of students' translation outputs

Students' translation outputs of idiomatic expressions were first manually retrieved, sieved through and analysed for translation patterns, then grouped in

translation strategies modelled from Baker's (1992), and subsequently statistically processed for establishing a percentage of strategy frequency. This procedure allowed identifying translation patterns in students' translation sequences.

It is worth emphasising that the analysis was not conducted to measure the overall performance ontranslation of the research participants. The analysis sought to explore and explain the difficulties behind translation errors by EFL undergraduates in translating idiomatic expressions, whether these errors are attributable to poor translation strategies or inadequate knowledge of equivalent idioms in target language.

The discussion will centre on syntactic and semantic forms as observed in students' translation outputs. As noted in the review of the related literature, mirroring lexicogrammatical patterns of two languages for establishing similarities is a first step towards language acquisition. If left unchecked it can, however, lead to translation errors difficult to correct, for the differences (syntactic, lexical, and pragmatic) between the language pair can be overlooked.

The translation exam was taken by students in two focus groups. The overall student population was 186[28], with 84 students in the first group (A) and 82 students in the second group (B). Table 15 shows the results for frequency of translation strategies employed by students for rendering the idiomatic expression _tighten belts'.

Table 15. **Frequency of strategies used by students in Group A for "*Tighten belts*".**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Equivalent	7	8.3	8.3	8.3
Correspondent	12	14.3	14.3	22.6
Literal/paraphrase	31	36.9	36.9	59.5
Omission	23	27.4	27.4	86.9
Untranslated	11	13.1	13.1	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

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[28]Questionnaire respondents were 187 involving three university-year students. Students for translation exam were 186 from two three-year groups majoring in English. The close match is sheer coincidence.

In recreating the idiomatic expression in Table 15 four translation strategies stand out: literal or paraphrase, omission, correspondent, FL idiom transfer or untranslated. These strategies account for 71.7 cumulative percent of all the sequences produced by learners. A further breakdown of this figure reveals that omission and FL transfer or untranslation make up a combined percentage of 40.5 percent. What this statistical evidence of omission and FL transfer shows is that more than one-third of all students do not possess the knowledge to understand and recreatesatisfactorily an idiomatic expression with a similar form and meaning in their language of habitual instruction (L2).

1. **Paraphrase**. Instances of literal translation occurred in students' translation sequences more frequently than any other single translation strategy for dealing with the idiomatic expression _tighten belts'. These instances appeared in many alternative forms and are farfrom being grammatically and lexically correct. As indicated previously, literal paraphrase in translating idiomatic expression is concerned with retaining the meaning of the whole idiom, while the syntactical arrangement is not preserved. Moreover, the semantic level of understanding is shifted from idiomatic or metaphoric to plain literal meaning. Therefore, the extracted literal meaning should be consistent with the lexicogrammatical constraints of the target language (French). The best, but far and between, literal translations of the idiom _tighten belts' include: _l'abandon de la tradition', la fin du long déjeuner, _deviennent avares', from the title sentence **_Au revoir to long lunch as French tighten belts'**. By sharp contrast, the overwhelming majority of learners came up with paraphrases that do not fall into any orderly, comprehensive, category. They include _la ceinture braque, la ceinture ronde; comme en France à table ; comme coutume chez les français ; une étroite

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région française ; les ceintures françaises ; restaurant français ; bon appétit ; français serés ; une région étroite française.'

At closer look, the exemplified paraphrases of the idiomatic expression ‗tighten belts' are incorrect lexically and grammatically, therefore they are discounted as satisfactory literal rendering of the English idiom, for they are devoid of meaning for the most part.

An explanation for these widelydifferent andinappropriate literal paraphrases can be the double-faceted difficulty in recognising and recreating English idioms in the process of translating. In fact, pinpointing the specific difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions, almost three-quarters of questionnaire respondents have particularly identified the difficulty to recognise idioms and poor knowledge of translation strategies.

2. **Correspondent**. Students' translation outputs for the idiomatic expression ‗tighten belts' provide limited instances of correct corresponding idioms in target language (French). This strategy for idiom can be exemplified by a number of approximate translations. The source idiom, as with paraphrasing, taken from the title sentence reads: ―Au revoir to long lunch as French tighten belts."

To make detailed evaluation of the grammatical and lexical forms as seen in students' translation productions, it is appropriate to keep the whole sentence in mind. Some typical examples of corresponding idioms include: *attachent les ceintures; ceintures attachées des Français; ceinture française ; se serraient ; ceintures attachées ; ceintures de Français serrés ; sont attachées au ceinture ; ceinture française attachée.*

In reproducing idioms, as illustrated in the examples above, EFL learners seem to juxtapose strings of words without establishing any structural subordination

between them. For example, the fundamental arrangement(subject+verb+object) characterising the kind of affirmative sentence involved in the example is not followed, for the grammatical subject in the sentence (Français) appears in numerous different grammatical functions such as adjective, prepositional complement.

Tables 16 and 17 report the findings for the idiomatic expressions ‗*making ends meet'*.

Table 16. **Frequency of strategies used by students in Group A for *Making ends meet* (1)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Equivalent	4	4.8	4.8	4.8
Correspondent	2	2.4	2.4	7.1
Literal/ paraphrase	74	88.1	88.1	95.2
Omission	3	3.6	3.6	98.8
Untranslated	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Table 17. **Frequency of strategies used by students in Group A for*Making ends meet* (2)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Equivalent	4	4.8	4.8	4.8
Correspondent	1	1.2	1.2	6.0
Literal/ Paraphrase	77	91.7	91.7	97.6
Omission	1	1.2	1.2	98.8
Untranslated	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

The results in percentage for the strategies used for ‗*making ends meet'* (1-2) in students‗ translation outputs are very similar. They will, therefore, be further amalgamated for findings. They clearly indicate strong tendency for paraphrasing with insignificant application of equivalence. Other translation strategies such as correspondent, omission and FL idiom transfer are statistically not considerable, for they are instantiated with limited examples accounting for less than two percent.

The source text for the repeated idiomatic expression ‗making ends meet‗ reads, respectively:

> Around 3,000 traditional French restaurants, cafés and bars went bust in the first three months of 2008 and unions predict a further rush of closures as people worry about **making ends meet** (1).
>
> **Making ends meet** with low salaries and rising food prices has become a national obsession as France's economy continues to be sluggish (2).

In paraphrasing the idiomatic expression ‗making ends meet' in the two occurrences of the idiom, students have used more than 70 literal variants including ‗*les fins des rencontres, l'arrêt des rencontres, en faisant des rencontres, qui se rencontrent, fins de rencontre faites, en fabriquant et mettre, la crise, mettre fin au rendez-vous, en fin de rencontre, la dernière rencontre, levé de séance, le fait de mettre fin à la rencontre, en faisant des rencontres, arrêter de payer, mettant fin à la réunion, en rencontrant, faisant une dernière rencontre, en mettant, fin à la rencontre, mettons fin au repas'*.

These translation sequences are significantly inappropriatelexically and grammatically as they do not transfer the intended meaning accurately and correctly. Looking at these outputs, one can discern the following patterns.

1. For the most part of students, the obvious meaning of the idiom is to put an end to an activity one was involved in. This is assumed, more often than not, to be a meeting.

2. On the other hand, literal variants on idiom as evidenced from the outputs judged on their own merit without regards to the source have a whiff of ungrammaticality.

Unlike equivalent idiom translation characterised by similar syntactic and semantic features, paraphrasing can take different syntactic and lexical forms

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because of the combination of alternative variants it can involve in translation process.

Two key aspects have been considered in discussing the literal rendering of idioms as observed in students' productions. First, the choice of lexical items used to transfer the meaning of the idiomatic expression, and second the conformity of the translation outputs with grammar constraints and usage rules of the target language (French) have been given close attention. In considering the translation sequences, it is important to note that these aspects cannot be overlooked, for they demonstrate how the paraphrase is grammatically and lexically correct in the given translation context. In other words, the collocational patterns of target text should be fluent, not atypical of the target language (L2).

The results in the table below present the use of translation strategies by the second group of advanced learners in translating (FL-L2) the idiomatic expression _tighten belts.'

Table 18. **Frequency of strategies used by students in Group B for *Tighten belts***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Equivalent	11	13.4	13.8	13.8
	Correspondent	15	18.3	18.8	32.5
	Literal/ paraphrasing	19	23.2	23.8	56.3
	Omission	24	29.3	30.0	86.3
	Untranslated	11	13.4	13.8	100.0
	Total	80	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.4		
Total		82	100,0		

Looking at the results shown for translation strategies in dealing with idiomatic expressions, one can form the clear impression that the strategies are evenly applied by the second group of students. There is no overriding predominance of one single strategy as was the case with the former group who relied heavily on paraphrasing. In contrast, omission and FLidiom transfer are widely used as

evidenced by the cumulative percentage of these translation procedures, 42.7 percent. The explanation for this wide use can be found in the difficulty to understand the constituents participating in the idiomatic expression, although they are fairly transparent and lend themselves to word-for-word translation for gaining an approximate literal understanding such as ‗serrer les ceintures'.

The analysis and discussion of translation outputs will be focused on lexicogrammatical features observed in three strategies predominantly used by students: paraphrase, correspondent, and equivalent.

The original sentence reads: ―*Au revoir to long lunch as French tighten belts*."

1. ***Paraphrase***. Less than 20 studentsused paraphrasing for translatingthe idiomatic expression ‗tighten belts'. The translation sequences offered by students show a variety of alternative translations which figure words strung in ungrammatical structure. This is obvious, for instance, in the following sequences: *qui fatiguera les Français, France soutient, comme le Français, a montrè ses systèmes, attaches les ceintures, la ceinture française, étaient habitués, économisent de l'argents, droit Français, les clochettes français, tintante clochette française, régions françaises serrées, comme à la française, comme à la française, comme à la française, l'habitude de la France, sont en faillite, bon plat tendue et courroie, comment les prends».*

Only three in nineteen literal translations use the key lexical items *ceinture* (2), *attaches* (1) and *serrées* (1). In each case, the item is put in such a way that it has no meaning. On the other hand, the preposition ‗as' appears to have heavily influenced some students, for ‗comme' used for ‗as' is strongly present in their outputs.

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In English, as is used in different ways and its translation into French is not always straightforward. In the translation outputs under discussion, _as' is understood by learners to mean _when' or _while', not _because', which is its true meaning in the sentence under discussion.

Faced with an idiom identical in form and meaning with the French counterpart from which it is, arguably, derived, students showed low proficiency in translating it nonetheless.

Table 19. **Frequency of strategies used by students in Group B for *Making ends meet (1)***

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Equivalent	19	23.2	23.2	23.2
Literal/ Paraphrasing	56	68.3	68.3	91.5
Untranslated	7	8.5	8.5	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

Table 20. **Frequency of strategies used by students in Group B for *Making ends meet (2)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Equivalent	18	22.0	22.2	22.2
	Correspondent	4	4.9	4.9	27.2
	Literal Paraphrasing	52	63.4	64.2	91.4
	Omission	2	2.4	2.5	93.8
	Untranslated	5	6.1	6.2	100.0
	Total	81	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		82	100.0		

The results for the second idiomatic expression in Table 19 and Table 20 show striking similarity in two translation strategies employed by learners for recreating the source-text idiom _making ends meet'. In the previous section presenting the translation outputs obtained from Group A,when statistical data showed strong close-match the results were amalgamated for analysis. For ensuring consistency of analysis the sameapproach will be applied here. First, the lexical and grammatical forms evidenced in students' translation sequences obtained using literal paraphrase will be discussed.

What is noteworthy about the first occurrence of ‗making ends meet' in Table 19 is the use of strategies limited to 3 as compared to other responses in Table 20 showing 5 different translation strategies for the same idiomatic expression in its second occurrence. Correspondent and omission do not figure among the strategies shown in Table 19. As a consequence, equivalent received more accurate translation responses, with almost one-quarter of all translationsoffered by students. Furthermore, in comparison with Table 19 which shows 8.5 percent of FLidiom transfer into L2 text, Table 20 provides identical cumulative percentage for omission and FLidiom transfer.

After presenting the statistical analysis of idiom translation strategies used by students, attention is paid now to the lexical and grammatical forms featuring in their translation outputs.

1. **Paraphrase**. The analysis of the paraphrased idiom (1&2) begins with the sentence in its two separate occurrences.

> Around 3,000 traditional French restaurants, cafés and bars went bust in the first three months of 2008 and unions predict a further rush of closures as people worry about **making ends meet** (1).
>
> **Making ends meet** with low salaries and rising food prices has become a national obsession as France's economy continues to be sluggish (2).

Typical translation sequences produced by students for the first occurrence of ‗making ends meet' include': *mettre fin à cette rencontre, mettre fin, la finale rencontre, aux fins de rencontre, fin des rencontres, les fins des rencontres faites, le licenciement, la cessation des rencontres, fermetures complètes, les fermetures, mettre fin la réunion, les dernières rencontre*.'

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A grammatical analysis of sentence (1) shows that the whole idiomatic expression is a prepositional phrase introduced by the head verb ***worryabout***, and functioning as complement of this verb, which entails the gerund form in English language structure. Students' translation outputs have syntactic features predominantly using verb phrase+noun such as ‗mettre fin + rencontre' or noun+noun construction with different lexical items such as ‗*la fin des rencontres, rencontre des produits finis, gain final, la hause des prix*'. A few translation sequences use a single-word noun, *licenciement*, for rendering the whole idiomatic expression. The semantic analysis beyond the grammatical level of outputs from students' translations shows that different forms taken by paraphrasing do not convey the meaning of the idiom.

Paraphrasing relies, as pointed out earlier, on the ability to get the gist of the idiom and put it in plain, literal, words. As evidenced by numerous examples provided above, learners failed to understand and paraphrase the source-text idiom. These results suggest that many errors in idiom paraphrasing can be explained by students' inability to recognise idioms as whole semantic units,in the first place.

In the second sentence,***Making ends meet*** with low salaries and rising food prices has become a national obsession as France's economy continues to be sluggish, the idiomatic expression in the gerund form functions as subject of the verb ‗has become'. As it becomes clear from this sentence structure analysis for identifying the grammar parts and functions filled by the idiomatic expression ‗making ends meet', its translation in the two sentences is restricted to its real function in eachsentence. In the first sentence, the prepositional phrase (about *making ends meet*) complementing the head verb (worry) can be translated with the help of infinitive verb. The second occurrence of the idiomatic expression,***Making ends meet*** *with low salaries and*

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rising food prices has become a national obsession as France's economy continues to be sluggish, can be paraphrased in different ways.

As pointed out by translation theorists (Vinay & Darbelnet,1972; Newmark, 1991) the gerund in the language pair English-French is intractable. Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) detailed it in the translation procedure they termed transposition. Newmark (1991, p.85) commented that the gerund is the ‗most neglected transposition'. These authors drew attention to the wide variety of grammar parts and functions the gerund form can fill.

In translation context, this flexibility in the syntactic behaviour of the gerund form explains why the second occurrence of ‗making ends meet' can be translated with the help of different word classes such as the infinitive verb and noun. Alternative translations of the idiomatic expression (2^{29}) are suggested to illustrate theflexibility of the gerund in translation context.Moreover, the flexibility of the gerund form in the idiom under discussion is supported by the wider application of all five translation techniques in Table 26, which showsthe results for the second occurrence of ‗making ends meet'. In comparison, Table 19 showed only 3 techniques used by the same group of students for recreating the idiomatic expression ‗tighten belts'.

2. **Equivalent**. The idiomatic expression ‗making ends meet' in both its occurrences received the most accurate equivalent translations. Almost one-quarter of the eighty-two strong group came up with the correct translation,*'joindre les deux bouts'*. As I explained at some length in discussing the implications for the use of the gerund in

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[29]1. Joindre les deux bouts avec des salaires bas et la hausse du prix des produits alimentaires est devenu une préoccupation nationale alors que l‗économie française continue d‗être morose.

 2. La débrouille (boucler les fins de mois) avec des salaires faibles et la hausse du prix des produits alimentaires est devenue une préoccupation nationale alors que l‗économie française continue d‗être morose.

both idiomatic expressions, some instances of different translations are shown in the second instance of the idiomatic expression: ‗*jonction des deux bouts'*. The gerund form turned out to be difficult to fit into one single translation category as evidenced in the first instance of the idiomatic expression (1).

Another group of less accurate equivalent translations using different word classes are: *joignant les deux bouts, en joignant les deux bouts, en faisant joindre aux deux bouts, la jointe des deux bouts*.

From these examples of students' translation outputs it is not difficult to see how students tended to translate the gerund with the help of varying grammatical categories. These different word classes are apparent in the ungrammatical word-string ‗la jointe des deux bouts' supposedly a noun, the infinitive verb (*joindre*) and present participle (*joignant)*.

A possible explanation for the high proficiency shown by students in this group could be their previous exposure to the idiomatic expression, as their results for the idiom ‗tighten belt', a similarly semantically transparent idiom, are less satisfactory, with only 11 accurate equivalent translations. Overall statistical evidence indicates that group B employs more efficiently all translation strategies.

3. **Correspondent**. Students' translation outputs provide no corresponding idiom for the idiom ‗making ends meet' (1). The second instance of the idiom (2) has been translated in 4 ways: « *les deux sont à joindre aux bouts, en débroullant, en débrouillant avec, en débrouillant* ».

4.2.3 Analysis and discussion of observational data for idiom translation

In-class observations involved one translation teacher. In addition, informal discussions with another translation teacher took place in the course of fieldwork. Observation data are used to complement insights gained from students' translation

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outputs in an attempt to answer research question 2. To do so, specific in-class translation activities and idiomatic expressions that cropped up in classroom translation tasks are presented. Two instances of idiomatic expressions extracted from translation passages will be looked at closely, to see how they were dealt with in classroom.

4.2.3.1 General procedure

The texts to be translated one at a time on a weekly basis are distributed to students beforehand. This allowed them to research and translatethese texts at home before in-class activities. Translation difficulties such as lexical, grammatical, or cultural are not identified by the teacher in assigned translation texts. Students are expected to do this pre-translation preparatory work unaided.

In-class translation activities involve both translation directions: English to French and French to English. The present part reports only on observational data collected from English-French translation tasks completed in classroom.

4.2.3.2 Specific procedure

In class,the translation teacher asked volunteer students to read out their versions loud and clear. The procedure is repeated a number of times (2-3). This practice gives the teacher and fellow students the opportunity to listen to different translations proposed by students. Finally, a student volunteers to write down his translation on the blackboard.

In this process, it was common practice to translate the text sentence after sentence. As the student translator completes his portion of translation, the teacher asks the other students to make remarks and suggestions. Spelling and grammar errors are addressed by the students and teacher. Alternative translations are offered. In the end, a translation is decided on based on improvements and corrections contributed by different students. Failing to reach a translation-decision agreed-on by the most part

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of students, the teacher will put his weight behind controversial lexicogrammatical decisions pertaining to moot points. As a result, a number of alternative translationsareprovided in the translated text. The alternatives in question are typically related to synonyms in context.

It is worthwhile to emphasise that the observed practice of inserting possible translation alternativesprovidesvaried synonyms in translation context, it can be misleading, reinforcing the wrong impression that there is no clear choice between translation options. In my opinion, translation decision should be discussed, and a clear translation decision opted for. Differentiating alternative translations in terms of linguistic and functional appropriateness is key in raising the linguistic competences of students. The teacher failed to explain why a given translation is favoured over another. The fact that the teacher did not have a fair copy can, in part, explain the impression of unpreparedness with regardto the completed translations.

4.2.3.3 Form of classroom interaction

Active involvement of students was noticeable in the process of translating. The teacher kept prompting students for improved alternative translations.

4.2.3.4Sample of in-class translation text

Prevention and fight against terrorism in Africa

International terrorism over the past decade has come to constitute a serious threat to global peace, security and advancement. This unfortunate situation and all its evil manifestations, around the world and particularly in Africa, undermine the most cherished values and fundamental principles of the 21st century, including development, democracy, human rights and freedoms.

The African Union strongly condemns all acts and forms of terrorism in Africa and wherever they occur.

Terrorism violates international law, including the Charter of The UN and the principles and values enunciated in the Constitutive Act of the AU and the protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, or PSC. African countries have long espoused the imperative need to combat and eradicate terrorism through a comprehensive approach that addresses its root causes. In their collective resolve and determination to deal with a common threat, member states of the AU have adopted instruments and decisions creating a common framework for the prevention of terrorism in Africa.

4.2.3.4.1In-class translation of the sample text

Prévention et lutte contre le terrorisme en Afrique.

Le terrorisme international au cours de la dernière décennie a constitué une menace réelle/sérieuse (une véritable menace) à la paix globale/générale, à la sécurité et au progrès.

Cette situation regrettable (désolante) et ses manifestations maléfiques/diaboliques autour du monde et particulièrement en Afrique, détériorent la majorité des valeurs et des principes fondamentaux du 21ème siècle y compris/notamment le développement, la démocratie, les droits de l'homme et les libertés.

L'Union africaine condamne fermement tout acte et forme de terrorisme en Afrique et (où) partout où il peut se produire.

Le terrorisme viole la loi internationale y compris la Charte des Nations Unies et les principes et valeurs énoncés dans l'Acte Constitutif de l'UA et le protocole relatif à l'établissement du Conseil de paix et de sécurité ou CPS. Les pays africains ont pendant longtemps exprimé le besoin impérieux de combattre et d'éradiquer le terrorisme à travers une méthode compréhensive qui s'adresse à ses causes originales.

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Dans leurs résolutions et déterminations collectives pour faire face à une menace commune, les États membres de l'UA ont adopté des instruments et des décisions créant un cadre commun pour la prévention et la lutte contre le terrorisme en Afrique.

4.2.3.4.2   Analysis and discussion of the in-class sample text

The teacher asked a student to proposehis translation. Alternative translations were offered by fellow students. Discussions entailed: how to translate the gerundoccurrences in identified passages,noun or verb? Ultimately, the noun is favoured over the verb. The translationdecision is arrived at by combining the best translations in the fair copy.

Collocations are translated using a set of possible translations: a serious threat: translated as ‒*une veritable/sérieuse, réelle menace*". A lot of time is spent on elucidating synonyms in context. Students are strongly involved making suggestions and corrections.

The text contains one idiomatic expression: root causes, mistranslated *causes originales*, for *causes profondes* ou *premières*. The linguistic construction has not been formally identified by the teacher.

The text contains other collocations such as strongly condemn (*condamne avec force*), international law (*loi internationale*), espoused the imperative need to (*exprimé le besoin impérieux*); comprehensive approach (*approche, méthode comprehensive)*. The source-text collocation pattern has been mirrored to target text (French). The correct translation should read *approche d'ensemble* ou *complète*. As with the idiomatic expression ‗root causes, in-text collocations are rendered literally, which is conducive to poor translation.

The analysis of translation passages shows that there is great tendency to translate literally. While literal translation is an attested translation strategy, its

overriding application to word combinations falling into different categories such as collocation and idiom is fraught withpoortranslation. The distinction was not made clear to any extent between idiom and collocationsposing particular difficulties in translation. Consequently, idioms and collocations were translated inaccuratelyin the most part of the instances discussed above. In conducting in-class translation activities, the teacher did not have a fair copy. This raises the real question of his dealing with translation.

Summary of findings on research question 2

In sum, the analysis of learners' translation outputs showed that students have a very low proficiency in recreating idiomatic expressions from English to French. The results indicate that they heavily tended to reproduce source-text lexicogrammatical features in recreating idioms. Idiom-translation enhancing activities through wider exposure and targeted translation activities can be used to address these difficulties.

Collected observational evidence points to the fact that little attention is paid to idiom translation, for the linguistic construction was not recognised and recreated accurately in target language. Translation teachers can acquaint learners with idioms based on the strategies described by Baker (1992). First, translation activities can purposefully target idiomatic expressions with similar form and meaning in source and target languages. In a further step, idiomatic expression with similar meaning but different form will be translated. Last, theoretical grounding can be given to explain why paraphrase and omission are common in translation process.

Research Question 3

4.3.0 Introduction

The third research question is posed as follows: what is the effect of EFL undergraduate student underachievement in translating idiomatic expressions? To answer the third research question posed, I tapped into questionnaire and interview data collected from students and translation productions from observational data.

4.3.1 Questionnaire and interview data

The vast majority of student interviewees have reported that in addition to in-class translation tasks,which give them wider exposure to idiomatic expressions, accounting for 72.7 percent of positive responses, extracurricular activities presentopportunities to seize upon for getting familiar with idioms, on the other hand. These extracurricular activitiesinclude reading, movies, radio shows, interpersonal communication, and interpreting informally in natural setting. Exposure to idioms through reading has been ranked highest among the aforementioned extracurricular activities for gaining increased exposure to idioms. Conversation in informal setting has been identified as the second largest idiom feeder activity.

Translation, it should be noted, is construed here in the wider sense of the term, including spoken and written translation. Low proficiency in idioms can lead to misunderstanding in social interaction and slow downthe flow of communication, the most important purpose of translation. Baker (1992), for example,correctly observed that the pragmatic function of idioms is to create a sense of belonging to a given language community. As one interviewee recounted his personal experience, he has got a friend from an English-speaking country.This foreign friend of his intersperses his conversation with idiomatic expressions, which he fails to understand;as a result, he feels frustrated.

Moreover, poor skills in translating idioms in interlingual translation (translation proper) or spoken translation (interpreting) can result in overall low performance, with missed opportunities for learning valuable skills, and raising linguistic competence and awareness of languages' similarities and differences, with the result of increased intercultural communication. To make this point clearer, let us look a little more closely at two translation outputs from the direct classroom observations carried out on February 19th 2014. The analysis of translation outputs will focus exclusively on idioms and collocations.

4.3.2 Observational data

The original text entitled ‗An Unsual Alliance' is extracted from *Africa Defence Forum*[30].

The original text contained the following sentence:

1. ―The referendum proved that while the people may be uncomfortable with the ***top brass***, they do have faith in the military in general."

The idiomatic expression ‗top brass' which is the expression of interest for analysis was not identified and dealt with appropriately as an idiom: how to understand in ST and recreate in TT. Not surprisingly that the translation ―*resolutions d'en haut*" retained in the end-text turned out to be grossly inaccurate. For correction sake, the meaning of the idiom under discussion should be inferred from the lexical item ―brass" and the contrast drawn in the text between ―top" and the ―military". Brass is used in making medals; top refers to high rank, as opposed to rank-and-file soldiers (troop). The classroom version has it: «*Le référendum a donné la preuve que même si les gens sont mal à l'aise avec **les résolutions d'en haut**, ils ont bien foi en l'armée en général.*» Compare with my alternative translation : *Le référendum fut la preuve que même si le*

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*peuple pourrait éprouver du malaise envers les **officiers supérieurs**, il a bien foi en l'armée en général.*

Let us consider the following sentence taken from another translation passage:

> 2. ̶African countries have long espoused the **imperative need** to combat and eradicate terrorism through a **comprehensive approach** that addresses its ***root causes**.*"

Here is the translation retained in class:

> «*Les pays africains ont pendant longtemps exprimé le besoin impérieux de combattre et d'éradiquer le terrorisme à travers une méthode compréhensive qui s'adresse à ses causes originales.*»

The text contains one idiomatic expression: ***root causes***, mistranslated into French as *causes originales*, instead of *causes profondes ou premières*. The linguistic construction has not been formally identified. Collocations abound in the text such as **strongly condemns,** Fr. *condamne avec force*; **internationallaw**, Fr. *loi internationale*, **espoused the imperative need**, Fr. *exprimé le besoin impérieux*; **comprehensive approach**, Fr. *approche, méthode comprehensive*.

In many cases, the translations given for collocations are not acceptable in French. English collocation pattern has been mirrored to target text in rendering the last collocation, comprehensive approach. The correct translation should be ̲approche d'ensemble ou complète'. Furthermore, the clause, ***thataddresses the root causes,*** is literally translated as *qui s'adresse à ses causes originales*. One improvement on this translation is ̲*qui s'attaque à ses causes premières'*.

In the main, as with the idiomatic expressions, ***top brass*** and ***root causes***, collocations are rendered literally, which is fraught with atypical word combination, with the consequent poor translation into TL (French). The translation teacher, who did

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not have a fair copy, seemed unaware of translation errors related to idioms and collocations as discussed earlier. The distinction was not made clear between collocation and idiom in translation context. Students' attention should have been drawn to these potential translation difficulties, and common translation pitfalls might have been avoided.

Summary and interpretation of findings on research question 3

EFL undergraduate underachievement in translating idiomatic expressions can adversely impact their overall translation performance and limit their efficiency in communication. The effect can be termed missed opportunities; missed opportunities when it comes to efficient communication, either verbally or in writing; missed opportunities for acquiring valuable translation skills, with the benefit of opening up new opportunities at job entry for would-be translators. Observational data showed that little attention is paid to idioms and collocations.
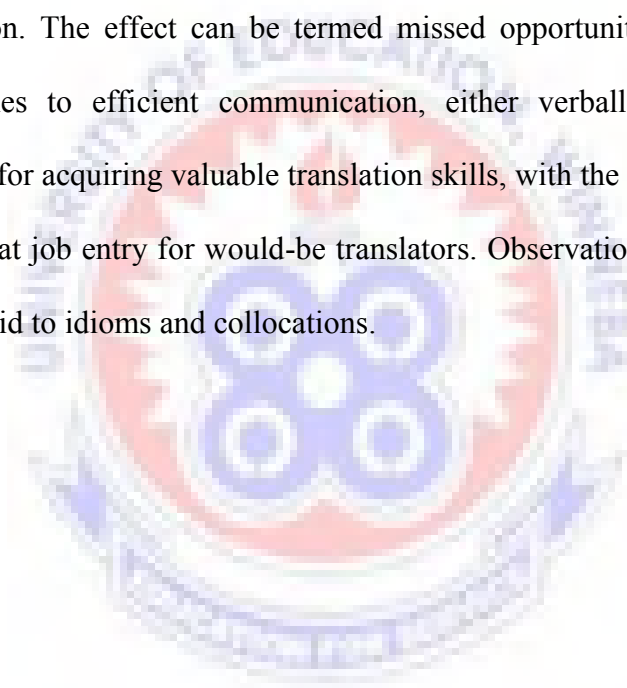
Research Question 4

4.4.0 Introduction

Identifying the specific difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating idioms into French and proposing translation-enhancing strategies are the research questions that lend significant justification to the present study. In the questionnaire, respondent lecturers and students were asked to identify activities that they deem may improve learners' skills in translating idiomatic expressions.

The fourth research question is formulated as: What are the perceptions of EFL teachers and students concerning the type of help they both need in order to enhance the skills of translating idiomatic expressions among EFL undergraduate students?

4.4.1 Perceptions on activities for enhancing the skills of translatingidiomatic expressions

The following table provides statistics for translating idiom enhancement-activities across university years.

Table 21. **Activities for enhancing the skills of translating idiomsas reported by students**

| | | YEAR | | | |
		DEUG 2	LICENCE	MAITRISE	Total
Translation classes targeting idioms	Count	20	17	7	44
	%	38.5%	15.3%	29.2%	23.5%
	Count	0	1	0	1
	%	0%	9%	0%	5%
Explicit instruction of idioms	Count	3	8	2	13
	%	5.8%	7.2%	8.3%	7.0%
Both activities	Count	29	85	15	129
	%	55.8%	76.6%	62.5%	69.0%
Total	Count	52	111	24	187
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

With regard to the activities that can lead to enhanced skills in idiom translation, Table 21 shows that the vast majority of learners do not restrict their

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choice to one single activity, e.g. translation tasks targeting idiomatic expressions or explicit instruction of idioms in other university subjects. Students prefer an integrated approach to skill-enhancing activities. In using the two activities for their intrinsic relevance for idiom translation skills, 23.5 percent of student respondents indicate translation classes targeting idioms, against a dismal 7 percent for explicit instruction of idioms in other university subjects. The result of this comparison is that explicit instruction of idioms will give wider exposure to FL idiomatic expressions, which can be very beneficial against the backdrop of the educational setting of learners. More importantly, translation tasks targeting idioms will gear learners with translation strategies for idioms, on the other hand.

Speaking from different perspectives, students and key informant lecturers, however, see eye to eye on the activities conducive to improved skills in idiom translation.Questionnaire data from informants show that two lecturers in four find that both activities (translation tasks targeting idioms and explicit instruction of idioms) can result in improvedskills of translating idiomatic expressions. In the same proportion, two informants in four rank translation classes targeting idioms higher than explicit instruction of idioms in other university subjects.

From this strong similitude in views expressed by research participants, one can draw the conclusion that enhancing translation skills in idiom has two important aspects to it: giving wider exposure to idioms and acquainting with translation strategies for idioms. At this juncture, the role of the translation teacher looms large.

4.4.2.2 Translation teacher's role

In the research question 1 focusing on the specific causes of EFL undergraduate student difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions into French

(L2), I unambiguously stated that translation curriculum and course syllabus give no help with how to handle idioms in translation classes.

Another specific difficulty is the educational background of teachers. In the words of one key informant (GF), translation can be challenging for both teachers and learners. With no formal training in translation and limited first-hand translation expertise the task of imparting the skills to learners is almost unachievable for translation teachers. ―Deep down", GF asserts in an interview, ―at the bottom of my heart, I do believe that there is some kind of special gift for translation, because I have met some people who are excellent in both languages when it comes to using them, but if you ask them to translate, they are very poor translators."

The main claim of the view expressed by GFis that translation ispractice hinged upon two basic skills: good reading and good writing. In addition to his credo that ―practice makes perfect", he put strong emphasis on the key requirements for translation teachers. These requirements are summarised as follows:

1. Well-seasoned teachers for teaching translation;

2. The translation teacher should have relevant experience in practising translation;

3. The translation teacher should enjoy performing the job;

4. The translation teacher should select course materials that students relate to.

The key informant (GF) concludes in the following, ―Again, the teacher should have some experience, the teacher himself has to be a good translator because you cannot teach a skill if you yourself you don't have any competence whatsoever in that skill. So it is better to have a good teacher in translation who would impart his knowledge to his students via translation by taking into account the needs of the students."

Summary and interpretation of findings on research question 4

The findings obtained from detailed evidence suggest that the prevailing perceptions among research participants on how to enhance undergraduate skills in translating idiomatic expressions involve a combination of complementary activities. One important component involved in this process is adopting relevant course curriculum and materials. Another key dimension is the training of teachers with theoretical and practical expertise so that they could impart theknowledge to their students.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0   Introduction

The goal of the study wasto explore the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions into French (L2). The study focused on the specific causes of undergraduate underachievement in translating English idiomatic expressions. Using translation as aid to second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) acquisition has been emphasised by researchers from cross-disciplinary perspectives.

The prevailing consensus among researchers, teachers, and learners is that translation, irrespective of direction, can be an efficient tool for achieving higher proficiency in second and foreign language through vocabulary enrichment, grammar consolidation, and heightened linguistic awareness of similarities and dissimilarities between languages involved. However, the specific difficulties experienced by EFL learners in translating idiomatic expressions into L2 received little systematic attention in literature.

The research problem is articulated around two key concepts, translation and idioms considered from the broader area of phraseology, with their prevailing definition and subject matter delineation difficulties. Given the diverse theoretical approaches to idioms, it was particularly important to clearly define and delimit the concept of idiom from other borderline formulaic elements such as collocations, compound nouns, and proverbs and sayings. In agreement with the views advanced by numerous phraseologists, the researcher has stressed that there is widespread misconception and confusion surrounding the concept of idiom. For the layman, the

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concept can be used to refer to (a) fluent speaking and (b) specific way of speaking characteristic of a given language. The researcher adopted a more complex view with regard to the concept of idiom, which is that (c) idiomatic expression is a multi-word linguistic unit ascribed a partial or full transferred meaning, functioning as part of a clause or sentence. Furthermore, the term idiomatic expression is preferredto the single-lexical item _idiom', which can be confusing and misleading because it extends the definition of idiom beyond its accepted meaning. In fact, the term idiom can be readily found to refer to a single word ascribed a figurative, metaphorical meaning.

The researcher makes this terminological delineation in the sense that the compound noun idiomatic expression features multi-word internal composition of the linguistic unit. As noted by numerous phraseologists, the concept of idiom does not lend itself to a clear-cut, easy definition, accepted across linguistic perspectives. In other words, there is no agreed-on definition of idiom. Despite the prevailingdisagreements in literature, the definitions offered by linguists from different perspectives can be categorised into three key characteristics: ***polylexical structure***, ***ready-made reproduction***, and ***conventionalised meaning.***

In the present study idiomatic expression is approached as set, flexible, irregular, functional, complex element of the lexicon. The researcher made the argument that suggested strategies for idiomatic expressions are closely related to translation procedures applicable to lexical items. Indeed, translation is often defined as equivalence-striking between source and target texts. In translation process, lexicogrammatical transformations that result into word class and word order variations (transposition) and cultural equivalent (adaptation) can be appropriately employed in translating idiomatic expressions, since these call for changes in word category and placement, and image-laden elements constituting the whole expression.

The study explained how the problem of idiomatic expression translation difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students relates to the knowledge of idiom translation strategies and good command of the target language idiom repertoire (L2). In addition to specifying translation difficulties encountered by EFL learners, the present study also takes a close look at in-class idiom translation teaching. It proposes idiom translation-enhancing strategies targeting EFL learners.

5.1 Summary of Methods

The study was designed and conducted as a qualitative exploratory case which drew on multiple sources for addressing the research problem: causes of the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students intranslating idiomatic expressions into French. To answer the four research questions the researcher utilized complementary sources of data.

5.1.1 Summary of data collection methods

This part presents a summary of data collection procedures and instruments. The qualitative investigation approach adopted in the present case study utilized a number of tools for information gathering, to address the research problem. The study was carried through purposive sampling of research participants. Qualitative data (participant observation, documents, questionnaires, and interviews) were collected and their contents analysed for their relevance for the research problem: the difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions into French (L2). Finally, students' translation outputs obtained from real-life examination paper complemented data collection. Evidence collected from multiple sources has been triangulated by source and method to ensure trustworthiness and credibility.

The study is guided by Retsker's (1982) theoretical framework of idiom as a linguistic unit, simple or complex, fulfilling a stylistic function, which does not lend itself to word-for-word translation on account of figurative meaning.

The researcher, however, has stressed in many places that figurativeness, albeit a characteristic feature of idiom, is not sufficient in itself for a single-lexical item, a compound, or a collocation to fall within the category of idiom as defined by Retsker (1982). The position adopted by the researcher is that these lexical units can share in common figurativeness as a feature without being qualified for the term idiom.

Therefore, while retaining the fundamental concepts of figurativeness and stylistic function pointed out by Retsker as defining characteristics of idiom in translation context, criteria for idiom selection adopted in the study do not include single-lexical items, compound nouns,collocations, and proverbs and sayings ascribed figurative, conventionalised meaning. Indeed, interdisciplinary approaches to idiom clearly distinguish three basic properties featuring in idiom: *polylexicality*, *ready-made reproduction, and conventionalised meaning* or *idiomaticity.* The complexities of idiomatic expression are best captured through the combination of these properties; no single feature as mentioned above can satisfactorily account for the heterogeneous nature of idiom.

Key Findings

This section renders an account of key findings from detailed evidence and draws a general conclusion to the study.

Figurativeness and stylistic markedness are thepivotal concepts featuring in Retsker's(1982) theory of idiom. These interrelated features through understanding and reproduction allowed identifying the specific difficulties encountered by EFL

undergraduate learners in translating idiomatic expressions into French. Generally speaking, EFL learners fail to recognise and understand idioms as whole semantic units. The idiomatic meaning derived from the interpretation of the whole, not individual constituent words participating in the idioms, is lost on students. This is evidenced in the predominant use of literal paraphrasefor idiomatic expressions in their translation outputs. Failing to find an idiom with similar meaning and stylistic markedness, one should discard stylistic connotations to retain content information only. Nonetheless, the literal paraphrase should be lexically and grammatically correct in conveying the meaning of the source-text idiom.

In dealing with idiom translation, the study drew on four strategies for idioms and fixed expressions offered by Baker (1992). These attested strategies for idioms have been complemented with another strategy, FL idiom transfer into L2, which emerged from the analysis of students' translation outputs obtained from real examination test.

The analysis has revealed that idiom translation difficulties experienced by learners fall within two broad categories:(1) learner-centred and(2) teacher-centred difficulties.

- The analysis of EFL learners' translation outputs and questionnaire data showed that learners find it particularly difficult to recognise idiomatic expressions in source text (77.5 percent), and have inadequate knowledge of equivalent idioms in target text (73.3 percent). As a consequence, they rely heavily on literal paraphrasing, accounting for a cumulative percentage rate of 61.9, for rendering idiomatic expressions in French (L2). At close look, this predominant translation strategy for idioms takes widely varying lexicogrammatical forms that do not conform, for the most part, to grammar constraints and word combination patterns of the target language (French).

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Data have shown that EFL learners translate word class for word class, stringing together ungrammatical stretches.

- Moreover, FLidiom transfer into target text and omission as translation strategies for idioms are widely resorted to by students. A possible explanation for the observed poor skills in idiom translation is students' limited exposure to idioms since questionnaire data have shown that EFL learners depend largely on in-classroom translation tasks for idiom input. Another explanation can be insufficient attention given to idiom translation strategies by teachers, for data collected from informant lecturersclearlyindicated that they make limited application of translation strategies for idioms.

  Although in literature equivalence and correspondence are the dominant translation strategies for idiomatic expressions (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1972; Retsker, 1982; Baker, 1992; Garbovsky, 2007), it is widely accepted that literal paraphrase as a translation strategy for idioms is practised on account ofsemantic range and usage frequency differences observed in cross-linguistic idiom repertoires.

  The important point should be noted that equivalence can involve lexicogrammatical changes, while correspondence is primarily concerned with pragmatic function, with little emphasis on syntactic and semantic changes or transformations. In plainEnglish, equivalence is indicative of translation skills, because students have to bring word arrangement(grammar) and meaning (lexis) to conform to target language constraints, while correspondence is found to strongly correlate to learners' linguistic competence of target language idiom repertoire. Put another way, in correspondence, learners have a counterpart idiomatic expression ready, available in target language, no or

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fewgrammatical or lexical transformations are carried out to achieve ̶same function relations" between source and target texts.

- The findings show that EFL undergraduate students overwhelmingly reproduce source-text lexicogrammatical forms in recreating idioms in French. Furthermore, observational data evidently show that little attention is given to idiom translation since the linguistic units occurring in the translation tasks were not recognised; as a consequence, idiom occurrences were inaccurately rendered in French.

- Translation teacher preparation is the second key aspect of idiom translation difficulties. This real difficulty became apparent through little attention paid to translation theory and idiom translation strategies in particular. Data gained from questionnaire, interview and direct classroom observation clearly pointed out that informants used 2 strategies in 4 for idiom translation. It is worth emphasising that there are many instances of idiomatic expressions with no idiomatic counterparts in target language. The implication for translation arising from this knowledge of contrastive idiom differences is that paraphrase can be applied as a valid translation strategy insofar that the output is lexically and grammatically correct in target language (L2).

- In addition, content-analysis findings indicate that translation curriculum and syllabus contents do not align with the broader problem of translation and the specific objective of teaching idiomatic expressions. They overlook translation problems such as word class divergence, a recurrent problem in translation, and do not look, to any extent, at any translation problem-solving strategies developed by translation theorists.

- Key findings lead to the conclusion that low proficiency in idiom translation can adversely impact students' overall translation performance and limit their efficiency in communication. The effect has been termed _missed opportunities' for learning valuable job-centred skills and missed opportunities for improving communication skills in social interaction.

- Multiple-source data clearly present the evidence that wider exposure to idioms through integrated approach (translation activities targeting idiom and explicit instruction of idioms in other university subjects)is largely perceived as the best approachto acquainting and dealing with idioms in translation.

5.3 GeneralImplications

In the light of the research findings, three major implications have beendrawn out.

1. The low skills in idiom translation exhibited by learners are attributable to their inability to comprehend source-text idiomatic expressions and poor knowledge of applicable strategies for translating them in French. Therefore, idiom translation-enhancing activities through integrated approach encompassing translation classes targeting idiomatic expressions and explicit idiom instruction in other university subjects such use reading comprehension of authentic writings in English, and exposure to the linguistic phenomenon in linguistics as a university discipline, can facilitateimproving the skills of translating idioms among EFL learners.

2. The findings on students' translation outputs showed that they predominantly employ literal paraphrasing. This suggests that many translation errors by EFL students are attributable to their inability to recognise the linguistic construction as a complex semantic unit. The implication of this result for translation teaching is to gradually target idiomatic expressions through

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proven translation strategies. First, learners are acquainted with idiomatic expressions of similar form and similar meaning (equivalent); next, students are exposed to idiomatic expressions of similar meaning but dissimilar form (correspondent).

The first level will build on the use of idiomatic expressions with equivalent counterparts in target language. Translational transformations on syntax and lexis will be closely looked at; for there are no full equivalents ready to be used without any translational transformations pertaining to grammar or vocabulary.

The next level will introduce corresponding idiomatic expressions in context. As noted previously, correspondent is more closely associated with the knowledge of target language idioms than translation transformations. The process of familiarizing learners with idiomatic expressions can be furthered to include paraphrase and omission.

The need for paraphrasing can be substantiated with insights gained from contrastive analysis of idiom systems in English and French. This approach can be an efficient tool for raising linguistic awareness of similarities and differences between English and French idiom repertoires.

Omission as a translation strategy for idioms raises the question of the pragmatic function of idioms in communication. This procedure can be applied if it results into no loss of information, content.

3. The difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students in dealing with idiomatic expressions are not specific to them. Indeed, a major aspect as shown through questionnaire and interview data is teacher preparation. With no or little theoretical background and proven first-hand experience in

translation, many teachers fail to help their students acquire requisite skills they lack themselves. Addressing teacher preparation through on-job training sessions could help alleviate the acute problem of teacher unpreparedness. The lack of theoretical grounding and practical expertise of teachers who have translation on their teaching commitments cannot be overemphasised.

Teaching translation theory and practice based on practical difficulties and solutions such as the concern of the present study presupposes that teachers meet the basic requirements for teaching the subject. Therefore, idiom translation difficulties should be seen as part of the broader problemsencountered in translation teaching. Aligning course curriculum and materials to integrating specific translation problem areas is another implication resulting from the researcher's analysis.

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher recommends that translation tasks target common translation problem areas.

(a) Differences in linguistic structure (grammar and vocabulary). In this respect, differences between nouns and articles systems have to be stressed on in particular. Word combinations of different types such as collocations and idioms permeate both English and French, and the study has revealed that their translation is fraught withenormous difficulties.

(b) Difference in the use of prepositions in the language-pair English and French. Many translation errors apparent in students' translation sequences are related to prepositions. Prepositions have no meaning different from the construction they occur in. Falling back on the antecedent and subsequent containing the

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preposition is the best technique applicable to prepositions in translation context.

(c) Unlike the authoritative translation curriculum gearingtranslation teaching to tensesas particular translation difficulties, the researcher makes the point that tenses as grammar category do not parallel in English and French. To achieve adequate correspondence, their translation is to be complemented with lexicaladditions. Therefore, emphasis has to be put on contrastive approach to tenses in English and grammar.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

The study sought to explore the causes of difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students in translating idiomatic expressions into French (L2). The aim was to identify specific difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions and proposing strategies for enhancing students' translation skills in idiomatic expressions.

The study has shown that difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions experienced by EFL learners were largely attributed to their inability to recognise and interpret adequately idioms in English and recreate them in French through valid strategies for idioms. Difficulty in recognising and understanding idioms, on the one hand, can be explained by limited educational and cultural background exposure. On the other hand, difficulty in recreating idioms in target text can possibly be attributed to poor knowledge of strategies for idioms. Therefore, the researcher recommends carrying a comparative investigation targeting one experimental group and one control group on a larger timeframe.

At the initial stage of the study, the experimental group and the control group will be purposefully selected from two-year university students. The experimental group will be purposefully exposed to idiomatic expressions through reading comprehension

and task-based translations targeting idioms. By contrast, the control group will receive no special treatment in idioms, except the random idiomatic expressions that crop up in translation tasks. This experimental study will be conducted with the same participant groups over two years. On completion of this time duration, the two groups will be put through a number(2-3) of idiom translation tests in order toassess their skills of translating idioms.

It is my contention that the experimental group will show better scores than the control group, which will demonstrate that skills in translating idioms can be taught and learned against adequate background exposure and appropriatecombination of strategies for dealing with them.

Collocations were of peripheralinterest to the present study. Investigation into broader translation difficulties experienced by EFL undergraduate students can be reasonably carried out to target collocations. Indeed, the findings derived from observational data showed that students failed to accurately translate English collocations into French, for the collocational patterns they offered in translation were strongly influenced by the source-text language (English).

Collocations are broadly defined as a combination of words whose co-occurrence is perceived as natural, typical, of a given language. Collocations are the predominant fixed word combinations in phraseological units. This explains their importance in SL and FL acquisition. Unlike idiomatic expressions characterised with idiomatic meaning, collocations pose fewer translation difficulties as they have a transparent meaning. Nonetheless, the ways words are strung together in combination are different from English toFrench. Translationdifficulties relating to collocations have been richly illustrated in data analysis.A few instances of collocational translation errors were identified in a short

translation sequence offered by students.This difficulty amply justifies the need to take a closer look at the word combination in translation classes.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for EFL Undergraduate Students

Full Name:

Year and Group

Phone number**, if available**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS

This questionnaire seeks to explore the difficulties encountered by university-level EFL learners in translating idioms (FL-L2).

1. **Are you an advanced learner of English (1 to 4-university year)**
   Tick (v) the relevant item.   .

   a. Yes

    b. No

2. **How long have you been learning English?**
   Tick (v) the relevant item

   a. More than five (6) years

   b. Specify any other relevant duration in the space provided.

3. **What subjects do you find interesting about learning English? List the subjects in order of importance to you.**

1.	4.	7.
2.	5.	8.
3.	6	9.

4. **How would you rank translation on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)**
   Circle the relevant figure

   1.   **2.**   **3**   **4**   **5**

   a. If you choose 1, not important at all, explain why.

   b.   If you choose 5, very important, give the reasons behind your choice.

5. **Can translation into L2 (English-French) contribute to achieving higher proficiency in language acquisition?**
   Tick (v) the relevant answer.

   Yes

   No

   Undecided

6. **Can translation out of FL (French-English) contribute to achieving higher proficiency in language acquisition?**
   Tick (v) the relevant answer.

   Yes

   No

   Undecided

7. **Which translation direction is more difficult in your opinion?**
   Tick (v) the relevant item.

   English into French

   French into English.

   Put forth arguments for your choice in the space provided.

8. *Are there any particular difficulties posed by English into French translation?*
   (v) Tick the relevant item.
   Vocabulary (collocations, idioms, proverbs, set expressions, etc.)

    Grammar

In which situations do you see translation playing out in your daily life?

   Thick (v) the relevant items.

   Movies

   Books

   Radio

   In-class activities other than translation classes

   Other sources, specify in the space provided.

9. **What is the purpose of translation taught in your classroom?**

   Tick the relevant item(s)

 A tool for language learning through grammar and vocabulary consolidation

 Professional translation skill acquisition

 Undecided

10. Tick (v) the main topics covered in your translation classes.

Business accounting trade agriculture science and technology education social

issues politics

Complete the list:

11. In translation, difficulties may arise at different levels: vocabulary (single word, collocation, fixed expression, idiom, proverb, etc.) and grammar. Which is more challenging between these two difficulties?
Tick (v) the relevant item

A. lexical

B. syntactic

12. How would you define an idiom?

Tick (v) the appropriate definition

a. A set word-combination that cannot be translated word for word.

b. A fixed word-combination that can be rendered word for word.

c. Give a definition of your own, if any different from the above supplied.

13. **When do you come across idioms?**

Tick (v) all relevant items.

Reading literature

Social interaction/communication acts

Official documents

Radio shows

Films

Classroom activities/translation classes

Specify any other sources of exposure to idioms

14. Do you think English idioms pose particular difficulties in translation?

Tick (v) the one answer.

Yes

No

Undecided

15. What are the causes of difficulties in translating idioms?

Tick *the relevant item*(s).

They are difficult to recognize, identify.

They are difficult to understand without previous knowledge.

Inadequate knowledge of translation equivalents in French.

Lack of knowledge of translation techniques/strategies for recreating idioms in French.

16. Is close attention paid to translating idioms in your in-class activities?

Yes

No

17. Tick (v) the techniques/strategies you use in translation classes for idioms.

Equivalent

Correspondent

Literal/paraphrase

Omission/avoidance

18. How many hours do you have translation classes?

Tick (v) the relevant item.

2 hours a week   four hours a week More.

19. How satisfied are you with your translation skills acquired in class?

Tick (v) the relevant item(s)

Very dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Undecided

Very satisfied

20. If you chose very dissatisfied/dissatisfied, how can the situation be improved?

21. How often do you translation outside classroom activities?

Tick (v) the relevant item.

One-two times a month.   More often.   Not at all

22. What kinds of texts do you translate different from your class assignments?

Tick (v) the relevant items.

A. Specialized (publicity/advertising, legal)

B. Varied (does not fit into any given genre)

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23. Are you faced with idiom-related difficulties in these translations?

Yes

No

24. How do you overcome the encountered difficulties?

Consulting idiom books

Looking up in dictionaries

Seeking guidance of people in-the-know (lecturers, classmates, native speakers).

25. What activities do you suggest for improving your skills in translating idioms?

Tick (v) the relevant item(s);

Translation classes targeting idioms

Explicit instruction of idioms

Both activities

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES!

APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire for Lecturers

Full Name:
Seniority:
Specialism:
Phone number
E-mail address

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LECTURERS
This questionnaire seeks to explore the difficulties experienced by EFL learners in translating idioms (FL-L2) and the strategies employed by lecturers to overcome these difficulties.

1. **Why is translation part of the curriculum throughout university years?**
   Elaborate your response in the space provided.

2. **How would you rank translation on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)?**
   Encircle the relevant number.

   1.   2.   3   4   5
   a. If you chose 1 to 2, not important at all, explain why.

   c. If you chose 4 to 5, very important, give the reasons behind your choice.

3. **Could you give an account of the topics you cover in translation classes?**
   List them in order of importance.
   1.   4.   7.
   2.   5.   8.
   3.   6   9.

4. **What is the role of translation in EFL acquisition?**
   Tick the relevant item(s).
   -For consolidating grammar
   -For consolidating vocabulary
   -For raising awareness of stylistic connotations in the Source and Target Texts

5. **What are the main difficulties experienced by undergraduate students in acquiring translation skills?**
   Tick the appropriate items.
   (a) Grammatical
   (b) Lexical
   (c) Stylistic
   (d) Specify below any other problem areas for EFL learners.

6. **Can translation into L2 (French) contribute to achieving higher proficiency in EFL acquisition?**
   Tick the one answer.
   Yes
   No
   Uncertain

7. **Can translation out of FL (English) contribute to achieving higher proficiency in EFL acquisition?**
   Tick the one answer.
   Yes
   No
   Uncertain

8. **Which translation direction appears to be more difficult for EFL learners?**
   Tick the relevant item.
   English into French
   French into English

9. **Put forth arguments for either response in the space provided.**

10. **In dealing with translating, difficulties may arise at different levels: vocabulary (single word, collocation, fixed expression, idiom, proverb, etc.) and grammar. Which is more challenging between these two difficulties?**
    Tick the relevant item
    A. lexical
    B. syntactic

11. **How would you define an idiom?**
    Tick the appropriate definition.
    a. A set word-combination that cannot be translated word for word.
    b. A fixed word-combination that can be rendered word for word.
    c. Give a definition of your own, if any different from the above supplied.

12. **What are the causes of difficulties that idiom translation poses for EFL learners?**
    Tick the relevant item(s).
    (a) Recognizing idioms in the source text
    (b) Understanding idioms in the source text
    (c) Recreating idioms in the target text
    (d) Inadequate knowledge of translation equivalents in target language (French)
    (e) Lack of knowledge of translation techniques/strategies for recreating Englishidioms in French

13. **To what extent do you pay attention to translating idioms?**
    Tick the appropriate response.
    (A) Task-based translations focused on idioms as linguistic units

    (B) Idioms are dealt with as they occur in texts being translated

    (C) Idioms receive no or little attention in translations

14. Tick the translation techniques/strategies you use for idioms in classes.
Equivalent
Correspondent
Literal/paraphrase
Omission/avoidance

15. How satisfied are you with your students' skills in translating idioms?
Tick the relevant item(s)
Very dissatisfied
Dissatisfied
Very satisfied
Uncertain

16. If you chose very dissatisfied or dissatisfied, what activities do you suggest for enhancing learners' skills in idiom translation?
Tick the relevant item(s).
(a) Translation classes targeting idioms

(b) Explicit instruction of idioms in other university subjects

(c) Both activities

17. What are the main problems in teaching translation (theory andpractice)?
Tick the relevant item(s)
Lack of structured official curriculum
Lack of translation textbooks
Translation seen as an aid to teaching and learning English
Lack of motivation on the part of learners
Specify, if any other.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES!

APPENDIX 3

Translation assignment and suggested translation

Desperate immigrants

There is growing concern about the number of immigrants who are seeking asylum. Then there is the question of their safety. Many of them are so desperate to leave their own countries and start a new life in another that they will **grasp at any opportunity** which they believe will enable them to do this. Sadly, many of them **risk life and limb** and still do not fulfil their dream.

Unscrupulous people are taking advantage of asylum seekers by promising to get them into the country of their choice **by fair means or foul**,provided they give them money. The desperate asylum seekers are parting with money which they have **scrimped and saved** for all their lives and are even taking the money which ageing parents had set aside for **a rainy day** and giving it to these people. They **have high hopes** ofa safer, better life and the money seems well worth it.

Most of them **do not have the ghost of a chance** of being granted asylum in the country in which they wish to settle, especially if they try to enter it illegally, but they are often ignorant of this fact. There are some who do **know the score,** butare prepared to take the risk anyhow, particularly if their lives are in danger in their own countries or if they face imprisonment by staying there.

Immigrants désespérés

Une inquiétude croissante existe au sujet du nombre d'immigrants à la recherche d'asile. Ensuite, il se pose la question de leur sécurité. Beaucoup d'entre eux éprouvent une envie si pressante de quitter leurs propres pays pour commencer une nouvelle vie dans un autre pays qu'ils sauteront sur n'importe quelle occasion qu'ils croient leur permettra d'y parvenir. Malheureusement, beaucoup d'entre eux risquent leur vie et ne réussissent pas pour autant à réaliser leur rêve.

Des individus sans scrupules profitent des demandeurs d'asile en leur promettant de les faire entrer dans le pays de leur choix par tous les moyens, légaux

ou illégaux, pourvu qu'ils leur donnent de l'argent. Les demandeurs d'asile, prêts à tout, se défont de l'argent qu'ils ont économisé au prix d'énormes privationsleurs vies durant et prennent même l'argent que des parents vieillissants ont gardé pour la soif et le donnent à ces individus. Ils fondent de grands espoirs en une vie plus en sécurité, meilleure ; et l'argent semble bien en valoir le prix.

La plupart d'entre eux n'ont pas l'ombre d'une chance de se voir accorder l'asile dans le pays où ils désirent s'installer, en particulier s'ils essaient d'y entrer illégalement, mais ils ignorent souvent ce fait. Il y a certains qui savent en fait de quoi il retourne, mais sont prêts à prendre le risque de toute façon, surtout si leurs vies sont en danger dans leurs propres pays ou s'ils sont menacés d'emprisonnement en y restant.

APPENDIX 4

Examination text and suggested translation

AU REVOIR TO LONG LUNCH AS FRENCH *TIGHTEN BELTS*

It is seen as the mark of civilized eating, distinguishing well-fed French workers from the English who ***wolf down*** sandwiches at their desks. But France's tradition of the three-course restaurant lunch is in danger of being killed off by the economic crisis. Around 3,000 traditional French restaurants, cafés and bars went bust in the first three months of 2008 and unions predict a further rush of closures as people worry about ***making ends meet***. The number of French restaurants going bankrupt rose by 25% from last year, and cafés forced to close were up by 56%.

Le Figaro's renowned restaurant critic, François Simon, said yesterday that French consumers' frugality had changed national eating habits and forced restaurant owners to the brink. Even the city's smartest restaurants were getting impatient with smaller orders. In one restaurant near Paris' Gare de Lyon, he reported, two couples were asked to leave by a desperate restaurant owner because they would not order starters. ***Making ends meet*** with low salaries and rising food prices has become a national obsession as France's economy continues to be sluggish.

Au revoir au long déjeuner car les français se serrent la ceinture.

Cela est considéré comme le signe de repas civilisé qui distingue les travailleurs français bien nourris des anglais qui***mangent leurs sandwichs au lance-pierre***[31] au bureau. Mais la tradition française de déjeuner à trois plats au restaurant est menacée de disparition à cause de la crise économique. Près de 3 000 restaurants, cafés et bars traditionnels français ont fait faillite au cours du premier trimestre de 2008 et les syndicats prévoient une nouvelle vague de fermetures car les français se font des soucis pour ***joindre les deux bouts***. Le nombre de restaurants français partis en faillite a augmenté de 25% par rapport à l'année précédente, et le nombre de cafés obligés de fermer avait augmenté d'environ 56%.

Le célèbre critique gastronomique du Figaro, François Simon, a dit, hier, que la frugalité des consommateurs français a changé les habitudes alimentaires dans le pays et poussé les restaurateursau bord de la faillite. Même les restaurants les plus mondains de la cité

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[31]Alternative paraphrase given: qui ***avalent rapidement*** leurs sandwichs au bureau.

s'impatientaient devant de petites commandes. Dans un restaurant près de la Gare de Lyon à Paris, a-t-il raconté, deux couples ont été priésde quitter par un restaurateur désespéré parce qu'ils ne voulaient pas commander d'entrées. ***Joindre les deux bouts***[32] avec des salaires bas et la hausse du prix des produits alimentaires est devenu une préoccupation nationale alors que l'économie française continue d'être morose.

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[32]Alternative paraphrase: La débrouille avec des salaires bas et la hausse du prix des produits alimentaires est devenue une préoccupation nationale alors que l'économie française continue d'être morose.

APPENDIX 5

Frequency table of translation strategies used by students

Group A

Tighten belts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Equivalent	7	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Correspondent	12	14.3	14.3	22.6
	Literal/Paraphrasing	31	36.9	36.9	59.5
	Omission	23	27.4	27.4	86.9
	Untranslated	11	13.1	13.1	100.0
	Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Making ends meet (1)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Equivalent	4	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Correspondent	2	2.4	2.4	7.1
	Literal/Paraphrasing	74	88.1	88.1	95.2
	Omission	3	3.6	3.6	98.8
	Untranslated	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Making ends meet (2)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Equivalent	4	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Correspondent	1	1.2	1.2	6.0
	Literal/Paraphrasing	77	91.7	91.7	97.6
	Omission	1	1.2	1.2	98.8
	Untranslated	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	84	100.0	100.0	

APPENDIX 6

Frequency table of translation strategies used by students in Group B

Tighten belts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Equivalent	11	13.4	13.8	13.8
	Correspondent	15	18.3	18.8	32.5
	Literal/Paraphrasing	19	23.2	23.8	56.3
	Omission	24	29.3	30.0	86.3
	Untranslated	11	13.4	13.8	100.0
	Total	80	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.4		
Total		82	100.0		

Making ends meet (1)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Equivalent	19	23.2	23.2	23.2
	Literal/Paraphrasing	56	68.3	68.3	91.5
	Untranslated	7	8.5	8.5	100.0
	Total	82	100.0	100.0	

Making ends meet (2)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Equivalent	18	22.0	22.2	22.2
	Correspondent	4	4.9	4.9	27.2
	Literal/Paraphrasing	52	63.4	64.2	91.4
	Omission	2	2.4	2.5	93.8
	Untranslated	5	6.1	6.2	100.0
	Total	81	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		82	100.0		

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APPENDIX 7

Students' translation outputs for idiomatic expressions

IDIOM TRANSLATION OUTPUTS - GROUP A

1. Equivalent	2. Correspondent	3. Literal Paraphrasing	4. Omission	5. Untranslated
Se sert les ceintures	Attachent les ceintures	Déjeuner compétitif	Omission	Tghten belts
Ceintures serrées	Ceintures attachées des français	Jeunes français à mesure	Omission	Tighten belts
Ceintures serrées	Ceinture française	Basé manger au dehors	Omission	Tighten belts
E serrent les ceintures	Se serraient	Zone étroite française	Omission	Tighten belts
Ceintures serrées	Ceintures attachées	zone étroite française	Omission	Tighten belts
Se serrent la ceinture	Ceintures de français serrés	Comme coutume chez les français	Omission	Tighten belts
Se serrent la ceinture	Ceintures françaises	L'abandon de la tradition	Omission	Belt
	Sont attachés au ceinture	comme des Français	Omission	Tighten belts
	La ceinture française attachée	Les quotidies français	Omission	Tighten belts
	Ceintures serrées françaises	Manger le poulet rotis	Omission	Tighten belts
	Ceinture français	Bon appétit	Omission	Tighten belts
	La ceinture attachée française	Restaurants français	Omission	
		La ceinture ronde	Omission	
		zone étroite française	Omission	
		A un l'étrangé	Omission	
		Comme aux ceintures serrés des français	Omission	
		La fin du long déjeuner	Omission	
		Deviennent avares	Omission	
		deviennent avares	Omission	
		Deviennent avares	omission	

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		Jaune radisse	Omission	
		Les ceintures françaises	Omission	
		La ceinture braque	Omision	
		Comme en France à table		
		Français serés		
		Une étroite région française		
		Lié au commerce		
		Zone raidissement		
		Long lunch à l'étranger		
		Séjour à l'étranger		
		Basés de manger dehors		
Joindre les deux bouts	Jonction des deux bouts	Les fins des rencontres	Omission	Incomplete
Joindre les deux bouts	Boucler leurs fins du mois	L'arrêt	Omission	
Joindre les deux bouts		Arrêt possible	Omission	
Joindre les deux bouts		L'arrêt des rencontres		
		Met fin à leur rencontre		
		Faire le rencontre		
		Mettre fin les rencontres		
		Fin de la rencontre		
		Mettre fin aux restaurants		
		La fabrication de viande finale		
		Mettre fin aux rencontres		
		Faible fabrication de viande finale		
		Mettre fin aux rencontre		
		Fins de rencontre		
		Faire un repas complet		
		Mettre fin à leur fréquentation		
		Des fins rencontre		
		En faisant des rencontre		

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		En fin de rencontre		
		En faisant fin aux rencontres		
		Du paiement		
		Fin de rencontre		
		Faire de fin		
		L'arrêt de rencontre		
		Faire l'hôte		
		Qui se rencontrent		
		La fin de rencontre		
		Fins de rencontre faites		
		En fabriquant et mettre		
		Prochaine rencontre		
		L'arrêt des rencontres		
		Faire de rencontres		
		Crise		
		La crise		
		La crise		
		La crise		
		Mettre fin au rendez-vous de la formation		
		La prise de la fin de la rencontre		
		Mettre fin à la rencontre		
		En fin de rencontre		
		Fins de réunions		
		Fin et fait		
		Prochaine rencontre		
		Prochaine rencontre		
		fin de rencontre		
		En fin de rencontre		
		En fin de rencontre		

		Manques de rencontres		
		Mettre fin des rencontres		
		Mettre fin		
		Mettre fin		
		Secession		
		S'y rencontrer		
		Pose-café		
		Levé de la séance		
		La dernière rencontre		
		La dernière racontre		
		La crise		
		Mettre fin aux rencontres		
		Mettre fin		
		La crise		
		Mettre fin au mouvement		
		Mettre fin aux mouvements		
		Mettre fin aux rencontres		
		Mis fin de la viande		
		Mettant fin de la rencontre		
		Faire finalement la viande		
		Mettre fin à la rencontre		
		Mettre fin à la rencontre		
		Mettre fin à la rencontre		
		Mettre fin à la rencontre		
		Mettre fin des rencontres		
		Mettre fin au mouvement		
		La fin au rencontre		
Joindre les deux bouts	Boucler les fins du mois	Le Fait de mettre fin à la rencontre	Omission	Incomplete

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Joindre les deux bouts		Entraînant les fermetures		
Joindre les deux bouts		A suivre		
Incomplete		Arrêter de les faire		
		Faire des petites rencontres		
		L'arrêt des rencontres		
		Mettant fin à la rencontre		
		En finir avec les rencontres		
		En mettant fin la rencontre		
		Faire la fin des rencontre		
		Finir		
		La fabrication de viande finale		
		Mettant fin au rencontre		
		Mettre fin à la viande		
		Mettre fin au rencontres		
		Mettre fin aux rencontres		
		un repas complet		
		Arrêter de payer		
		En faisant des fins		
		En faisant rencontre finale		
		En mettant fin		
		Enfin rencontrer		
		Etre payé		
		Fabriquant des fins de rencontre		
		Faire de fin		
		Faire l'arrêt de rencontre		
		Faire l'issue de rencontre		
		Fait et rencontre		
		Faite la fin de rencontre		
		Fin de rencontre faite		
		Incomplete		

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		L'arrêt des rencontres		
		La baisse		
		La crise		
		La crise		
		La crise		
		La crise		
		La fabrication prend fin		
		La prise de la fin de la rencontre		
		Le fait de mettre fin à la rencontre		
		Les dernières productions de rencontre		
		Mettant fin à la réunion		
		Mettre fin au fait		
		Par contre		
		Qui prend fin		
		En fin de rencontre		
		En fin de rencontre		
		En fin de rencontre		
		En mettant fin à la rencontre		
		En mettant fin aux rencontres		
		En rencontrant		
		Entraînant les fermetures		
		Faire de rencontre		
		Faire des pose-cafés		
		Faire leur rencontre finale		
		Faisant une dernière rencontre		
		L'abaissement		
		La crise		
		Mettant fin aux rencontres		
		Mettre fin		

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		Mettre fin à cette rencontre		
		Mettre fin à la rencontre		
		Mettre fin au mouvement		
		Mettre fin aux rencontres		
		mise fin de la viande		
		En mettant fin de la rencontre		
		Faisant enfin la viande		
		Le fait de mettre fin à la rencontre		
		Mettez fin à la rencontre		
		Mettre fin		
		Mettre fin		
		Mettre fin à des rencontres		
		Mettre fin au contestation		
		Mettre fin au rencontres		
		Macher la viande		
		Mettons fin au repas		
		La crise		

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IDIOM TRANSLATION OUTPUTS - GROUP B

1. Equivalent	2. Correspondent	3. Literal Paraphasing	4. Omission	5. Untranslated
Serrait la ceinture	La canture française	Qui fatigurea les français	Avoidance/omission	Les ceintures tighten
Serraient les ceintures	les ceintures des français	France soutient	Avoidance/omission	Tighten belts
Serrent les ceintures	Ceintures françaises serré	Comme le français	Avoidance/omission	Les ceintures tighten
Resserre les ceintures	Attache les ceintures	A montré ses systèmes	Avoidance/omission	Tighten belts
Se resserrent les ceintures	Ont serré la ceinture	Attaches les ceintures	Avoidance/omission	Tighten belts
Se serrent la ceinture	Les ceintures des français	La ceinture française	Avoidance/omission	Tighten belts
Serrent leur ceinture	Reserre sa ceinture	Étaient habitués	Avoidance/omission	Tighten belts
Se serre la ceinture	La serrer la ceinture français	Économisent de l'argents	Avoidance/omission	Tight belts français
Serrer la ceinture	Une serre des ceintures	Droit français	Avoidance/omission	Tighten belts
Se serre la ceinture	des ceintures français sérrés	Les clochettes français	Avoidance/omission	Tighten belts
Se serrent les ceintures	Ont attachés les ceintures	Tintante clochette française	Avoidance/omission	Tighten belts
	Attachent leur ceinture	regions françaises serrées	Avoidance/omission	
	Des ceintures français serrées	Comme à la française	Avoidance/omission	
	Ont serrés les ceintures	Comme à la française	Avoidance/omission	
	Attache les ceintures françaises	Comme à la française	Avoidance/omission	
		L'habitude de laFrance	Avoidance/omision	
		Sont en faillite	Avoidance/omission	
		Bon plat tendue et courroie	Avoidance/omission	
		Comment les prends	Bande français	
			Avoidance/omission	
			Avoidance/omission	
			Avoidance/omission	
			Avoidance/omission	
			Avoidance/omission	

Joindre les deux bouts		Mettre fin à cette rencontre		Avoidance/omission
Joindre les deux bouts		Mettre fin aux rencontres		Avoidance/omission
Joindre les deux bouts		Mettre fin		Dernière rencontre
Joindre les deux bouts		La finale rencontre		incomplete
Joindre les deux bouts		Mettre fin à des meetings		Incomplete
Joindre les deux bouts		La fin des rencontres		Incomplete
Joindre les deux bouts		Rencontres des produits finis		Avoidance/omission
Joindre les deux bouts		L'arrêt de ce rencontre		
Joindre les deux boûts		Mise en terme des rencontres		
Joindre les deux bouts		Se faire des rencontres		
Joindre les deux bouts		Aux fins de rencontres		
Joindre les deux bouts		Le bout du rencontre		
Joindre les deux bouts		Mis fin à la rencontre		
Joindre les deux bouts		Fin des rencontres		
joindre les deux bouts		Mettre fin la rencontre		
Joindre aux deux bouts		Mit fin la rencontre		
Joindre les deux bouts		La fin de la rencontre		
Joindre les deux bouts		À l'encontre des fins		
Joindre les deux bouts		Des fin de rencontre		
		Gain final		
		Fin de rencontre		
		Faire la fin de rencontre		
		Faire la rencontre finale		
		Faisant fin à cette rencontre		
		Faisant un rassemblement final		
		le manque de fin		
		Les fins des réunions faites		
		Le licenciement		
		licenciement		

		licenciement		
		La fin des rencontre		
		la fin du contrat		
		La hause des prix		
		À la fin des rencontres		
		La fin de la rencontre		
		S'inquiètent le pure		
		La fin des rencontres		
		Du fin du rencontre		
		Find de la rencontre		
		Fin de leurs rencontres		
		Fins à leurx rencontres		
		Mettre à la fin		
		Se rencontrer/donner rendez-vous		
		La cessation des rencontres		
		Fin des rencontres		
		Mise en fin		
		Fermetures complètes		
		Les fermetures		
		Finde rencontré		
		La fermeture		
		Mettant les fins de rencontre		
		Mettre fin la réunion		
		Metrre fin		
		Mettre fin les réunions		
		Mettent fin à leur rencontre		
		Les dernières rencontre		

Joignant les deux bouts	Les deux sont à joindre aux bouts	Satisfaire financièrement	Avoidance/omission	incomplete
Joindre les deux bouts	En débrouillant	Satisfaire financièrement	Avoidance/omission	incomplete
Joindre les deux bouts	En débrouillant avec	En mettant fin		incomplete
Joindre les deux bouts	En débrouillant	Réalisation de la rencontre finale		incomplete
Joindre les deux bouts		À la fin du meeting		Incomplete
Joindre les deux boûts		Au bout du rencontre		?
Joindre les deux bouts		En faisant arrêter les rencontres		
Joindre les deux bouts		Faire un rassemblement final		
En joignant les deux bouts		La rencontre des fins		
Joignant les deux bouts		Le bout du rencontre		
Joindre les deux bouts		Menu rencontre		
En faisant joindre aux deux bouts		Mettant fin aux rencontres		
Joindre aux deux bouts		Mettre fin la rencontre		
Joindre les deux bouts		Mit fin la rencontre		
la jointe des deux bouts		Pour faire la rencontre final		
La jointre des deux bouts		À l'encontre		
Joindre les deux bouts		Conclu		
Joindre les deux bouts		Durant la fin		
		En faisant baissé		
		Faire fin rencontre		
		Faire la rencontre finale		
		Faisant fin rencontre		
		Faisant un rassemblement final		
		Fin de la rencontre		
		La fin des entretiens		
		Le licenciement		
		licenciement		
		licenciement		

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		Mettant fin à la rencontre		
		Mettre fin		
		Mettre fin		
		Pour mettre fin ces rencontres		
		À la fin des rencontres		
		La fin de la rencontre		
		Mettant des fins		
		Mettant des fins		
		Mettre à la fin		
		Mettre fin		
		Mettre fin à des rencontres		
		Mettre fin aux rencontres		
		Mise en fin		
		Pour conclure		
		Pour conclure		
		La fermeture		
		Le licenciement		
		Mettant fin la réunion		
		Mettre fin		
		Mettre fin la réunion		
		En mettant fin		
		Faire une fermeture		
		Faisant la décompte		
		Mettre fin aux partie		