Possible ways of translating English idioms and culturally bound expressions into Arabic

Abstract

This study is prepared to show some of the difficulties the translator might encounter when translating some culturally bound pieces of information. These would include the translation of some idioms and some culturally bound concepts from both Arabic and English. For our purpose, three concepts should be defined which are: translation, language, and culture.

The concept of translation is defined by Bell (1991:5) as: "Translation is the expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another, source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences".

The concept of language is defined by Collins English Dictionary (1983) as follows: A system for the expression of thoughts, feelings, etc., by the use of spoken sounds or conventional symbols to communicate with understanding because of common background, values, etc."

Nida (1994"157) defines culture as: "The total beliefs and practices of society". Words only have meaning in terms of the culture in which they are used, and although languages do not determine culture, they certainly tend to reflect a society's beliefs and practice ".

These three concepts interlock firmly in the translation of idioms and culturally bound pieces of language.