

تحديات ترجمة التعبيرات المجازية في النصوص الأدبية من الإنجليزية إلى الكردية

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الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة المجازية، تحديات الترجمة، الترجمة من الإنجليزية إلى الكردية.

كيفية اقتباس البحث

عبدالرحمن ، راز فريدون ، وريا عزالدين علي ، تحديات ترجمة التعبيرات المجازية في النصوص الأدبية من الإنجليزية إلى الكردية، مجلة مركز بابل للدراسات الإنسانية، تشرين الأول 2026، المجلد: 16، العدد: 10.

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The Challenges of Translating Figurative Expressions in Literary Texts from English into Kurdish

The Challenges of Translating Figurative Expressions in Literary Texts from English into Kurdish

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Keywords : Figurative Language, Translation Challenges, English-Kurdish Translation.

How To Cite This Article

Abdulrahman, Raz Fraidoon , Wrya Izzadin Ali , The Challenges of Translating Figurative Expressions in Literary Texts from English into Kurdish, Journal Of Babylon Center For Humanities Studies, October 2026, Volume:16, Issue10.



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الخلاصة:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على التحديات المتعددة الأوجه التي تُعدّ أساسية في ترجمة التعبيرات المجازية في النصوص الأدبية من الإنجليزية إلى الكردية. فبينما تتوسع الترجمة الأدبية من الإنجليزية إلى الكردية باستمرار، يبقى نقل التعبيرات المجازية، تحديًا لغويًا وثقافيًا مهمًا. وباستخدام إطار منهجي نوعي، طبقت هذه الدراسة مقابلات شبه منظمة مع مترجمين ذوي خبرة وكفاءة لتحليل التحديات التي يواجهونها. كشف التحليل الموضوعي للبيانات عن عدة تحديات مترابطة، بدءًا من فجوة في تحديد المعاني، حيث يعجز المترجمون عن تمييز التعبيرات المجازية، فيترجمونها حرفيًا، مما يُفسد المعنى. ويزداد الأمر صعوبةً بسبب الاختلافات الثقافية، إذ يُجبر غياب المقابلات المباشرة في اللغة الكردية المترجمين على إجراء تغييرات جذرية في

أسلوب كتابة النص. إضافةً إلى ذلك، ثمة صراع دائم مع الحفاظ على الجمالية، حيث يجد المترجمون صعوبة في الحفاظ على الأسلوب والإيقاع والتأثير الأصليين مع جعل النص يبدو طبيعيًا في اللغة الكردية. وأخيرًا، تتفاقم هذه المشكلات بسبب نقص الموارد، إذ لا توجد قواميس رسمية إنجليزية-كردية لهذه التعبيرات، مما يُجبر المترجمين على الاعتماد على تخميناتهم الشخصية بدلًا من الاستعانة بمراجع متخصصة. تشير النتائج إلى أن الكفاءة اللغوية ليست شرطًا كافيًا للتعامل مع كثافة التعبيرات المجازية، وأن إتقان لغتين لا يكفي للتعامل مع نص مليء بها. ونظرًا لنقص الموارد في الترجمة من الإنجليزية إلى الكردية، يُضطر المترجمون إلى ابتكار حلولهم الخاصة للتعبيرات الثقافية. ولحل هذه المشكلة، تقترح الدراسة إنشاء قواميس متخصصة للتعبيرات المجازية، والتركيز على إجراءات الترجمة التي تساعد طلاب الترجمة في ترجمة هذه التعبيرات. وتُعدّ هذه الخطوات ضرورية لجعل المترجمين الأفراد أكثر انساقًا واحترافية.

Abstract

This study aims at highlighting the multi-faceted challenges that are encountered by translators in the translation of figurative expressions in literary texts from English into Kurdish. While English-Kurdish literary translation continues to expand, the transposition of figurative expressions remains a primary linguistic and cultural challenge. Employing a qualitative methodological framework, this study applied semi-structures interviews with experienced and professional translators to analyze the challenges they face. The thematic analysis of the data elucidated several interrelated challenges, starting with an identification gap, where translators fail to recognize figurative expressions and end up translating them literally, which ruins the meaning. This made harder by cultural differences, as the lack of direct matches in Kurdish forces the translators to make big changes to how the text is written. Additionally, there is a constant struggle with aesthetic preservation, where translators find it difficult to keep the original style, rhythm and impact while making it sound natural in Kurdish.

Finally, these issues are made worse by a lack of resources, as there are no official English-Kurdish dictionaries for these expressions, leaving translators to rely on their own guesswork instead of professional guides. The findings suggest that linguistic proficiency is an insufficient prerequisite for managing the thickness of figurative expressions, and being fluent in two languages is not enough to handle a text full of figurative expressions. Since there is a resource gap in English-Kurdish



translation, translators are forced to come up with their own personal solutions for figurative expressions. To fix this, the study suggests creating specialized dictionaries for figurative expressions and focusing on those translation procedures that help translation students in translating figurative expressions. Taking these steps are vital to making Kurdish translators more consistent and professional.

1. Introduction:

Figurative language is not merely an ornamental decoration of language; it is a significant rational means through which people perceive and classify and sort the reality of life. In literary texts, figures of speech serve as the connective tissue between the abstract imagination and its culture's physical setting. Therefore, when a translator tries to transfer these mental maps which are created in the SL into the TL, they face a fact which can be seen translator's extreme obstacle. The difficulty of translating figures of speech lies in the fact that they are not one to one linguistic equivalence, rather they are just like an intense knot of social, cultural, historical, and environmental connotations. The primary issue that translators confront is cultural specificity which obligates the translator to look for an equivalent in the TL that fits the sense and the effect of the figure of speech that exists the SL. Beyond the culture, the morphological and syntactic differences pose a considerable challenge. English language uses compact figurative compounds, while Kurdish; with its distinct phrasal structures and dialectical variations, utilizes longer descriptive phrases. Thus, this expansion in Kurdish leads to weaken the poetic drive and the rhythmic economy of the literary work in the SL. Therefore, the Kurdish translators are forced to an endless compromise of equivalence; equivalence of effect or meaning. Translation of figures of speech have been studied in European and major Asian languages, the context of Kurdish translation presents an exclusive set of challenges. Most of the researches and studies in Kurdish context are about translating metaphors and idioms, while there are many other figures of speech that are commonly used in English literary texts. Consequently the 21 cases examined in this study, in which professional translators working across different literary genres report different issues and challenges. They are often required to work not as linguists only, but as cultural brokers *"Translators must re-invent and recreate figures of speech to fit the Kurdish rational framework and Kurdish understanding"* as one of the translators says. This paper investigates how these 21 translators navigate the tension between the image and the sense of

English figures of speech. By using a multiple case study design, this study identifies whether the challenges the translators encounter are chiefly linguistic, cultural, or stylistic. Understanding these obstacles is fundamental to improve the quality of translating literary texts and assist training trainees and students who study translation at the departments of translation in Kurdistan region.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Translation:

Translation as a complex concept goes beyond the simple exchange of words from a language to another. thus, there has been an ongoing debate on whether it is regarded as an art or a craft. One of the most cited definitions of translation is given by Catford (1960, p. 20) as it is the replacement of the material found in the SL text by equivalent material in the TL text. This view which was centered on formal linguistic equivalence was later extended by Nida and Taber (1969, p. 12) who shifted their focus toward dynamic equivalence stating that; translation is as the process of translating the SL text message in the TL by reproducing the closest natural equivalence in the Receptors language in terms of both meaning and style.

Moreover, in more recent studies, the definition of translation has changed and moved toward social and cultural scopes, as Hatim and Mason (2004, p.6) claims that translation is the process in which written texts are transferred from the SL to the TL, when this transference is managed by translators in certain and particular socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, Ahmed (2021, p. 14) in his MA thesis titled *The Cultural Turn in Kurdish Translation: A study on Modern Fiction*, argues that translation in Kurdish is not a linguistic act only, rather it is regarded as a cultural endurance and linguistic enhancement in the Kurdish socio-cultural context, in which the translator plays the role of a mediator between two different worldviews. Moreover, Newmark (1988, p. 5) simplifies translation definition stating that translation is rendering a text meaning to another language in the way that the author of the text intended. Therefore, the definitions mentioned above clarifies that modern theories of translation moved away from the rigid and classical word-for-word translation, and they moved toward the functionalist and cultural approaches of translation.

2.2 Literary Translation:

Generally, literary translation is branch on the discipline that is very demanding, since it deals with the aesthetics and aesthetic function of





language. Unlike technical and scientific translation which highlight factual accuracy, Literary translation prioritizes preserving rhyme and rhythm of the prose, the emotional resonance of the story line, and the author's voice as well. To Lander (2001, p.7), literary translation is not the translation of words, rather it is the translation of messages in which the translator should reproduce the literary effect of the text in the TL culture and context.

Furthermore, Bassnet (2014, p.92) emphasizes that a literary translator must be writer himself as much as a linguist, stating that the only thing in literally translation is that the translator must be able to comprehend the refinements of the SL text and then be able to re-create them in a new language which is the TL. This may be very difficult in Kurdish Language, as it is noted by Karim (2019, p. 45) in his PhD dissertation stating that translating literary texts into Kurdish language involves a complex landscape of dialectal variations as well as and the lack of a standard literary registers, which makes literary translation a form of creative instruction rather than a literal transfer. While Lefevere (1992. P.9) describes the process of literary translation as a rewriting process stating that literary translation is an interpretation which is affected by the structures of power and the target culture poetics. Therefore, a literary translator is not seen as a transparent window only, but also as lively and dynamic participant in the literary lifespan of the text.

2.3 Figurative Language:

As for figurative language, it is the language that includes the usage of one of the figures of speech or some of them. Figurative language is the use of some words in a way that diverts from their normal and traditional or literal meaning in order to render a more complex or impactful and influential message. Abrams and Harpham (2014, p. 132) state that figures of speech are seen as a departure from the standard and traditional use of words to attain and reach an unusual sense and effect. Figures of speech are generally categorized into tropes and schemes. Generally, tropes are regarded as the umbrella term which includes any figure of speech that changes the meaning of the words, that is quite opposite to schemes in which the order or the word patterns change. The term 'trope' is originally taken from the Greek work 'tropos' that means turn, direction or way. Trope in classical rhetoric refers to the process of changing or turning a word away from its main meaning. Beckson and Grans (1989, p. 278) defines tropes as the use of any word or phrase in a meaning that is different from its literal sense. While Abrams and

Harpham (2014, p. 13) defines tropes as figures of thought that include phrases or words that results in a obvious change in what we generally take to be their traditional meaning. To Abrams and Harpham (2014), the use of tropes is regarded as the crucial vehicle by which the writer and the authors create layers of meaning in literature and literary texts. To Beckson and Granz (1989) the most common tropes are irony, metaphor, metonymy, personification and synecdoche.

As for schemes, the term is originally taken from Greek 'Schema' which means shape or form to deal with a 'turn' or change in the arrangement of words in physical structure. Corbett and Connors (1999, p.377) define scheme as a crafty deviation from the conventional arrangement of words. While Abrams and Connors (2014, p. 132) state that schemes are the rhetorical figures or figures of case that serve as a deviation from the conventional use of words not in the sense of words primarily, but rather in the word order and the syntactic pattern of the words. In brief, tropes are about imagination in language, while schemes are about musicality of language such as alliteration, assonance, consonance and etc.

3. Methodology:

The methodology of this study details the logical process used to collect and analyze data from 21 literary professional translators. the principal of this methodology is a purposive sampling strategy which was employed to select participants who hold a degree or high degree of expertise and a proven record of professional publications in English-Kurdish literary translation. The cohort consists of 13 males and 8 females, a distribution that provides a representative view of senior-level expert pool in the targeted cities. The translators interviewed for this study have between four to 22 years of experience in literary translation, with a group average of 14 years, the participants provided a longitudinal perspective that is essential for understanding the process and challenges of translating figurative language in English- Sorani Kurdish literary translation in the region.

3.1 Research Design:

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive outline, a strategy that is chosen for its ability to provide a comprehensive and nuanced summary of experiences in the everyday terms of those who experience them. This design is unlike the purely theoretical designs, it prioritizes the voice of the translator and explores complex professional realities of literary

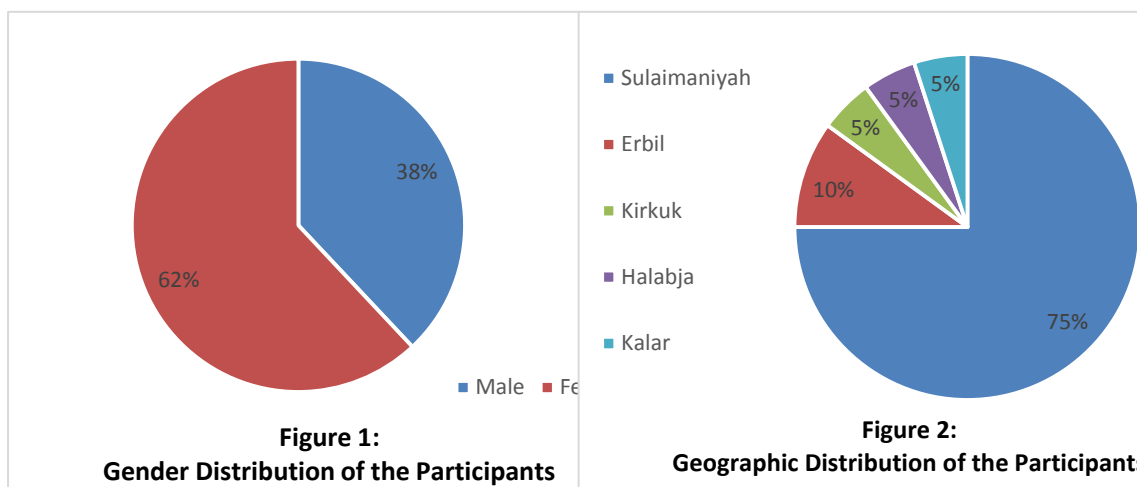


translators. In this research design in which a multiple case study framework is employed, and it inspects different cases of translators, from different geographical locations in the region, which serves as a distinct context for analysis. The logical structure of this design is inductive, meaning that instead of testing a pre-defined hypothesis, the study allows theories to emerge directly from raw data gathered from the participants. This design incorporates triangulation as a core strategy for internal validity. Data is triangulated across three variables which are academic levels (BA, MA, and PhD), professional specializations, and geographical location.

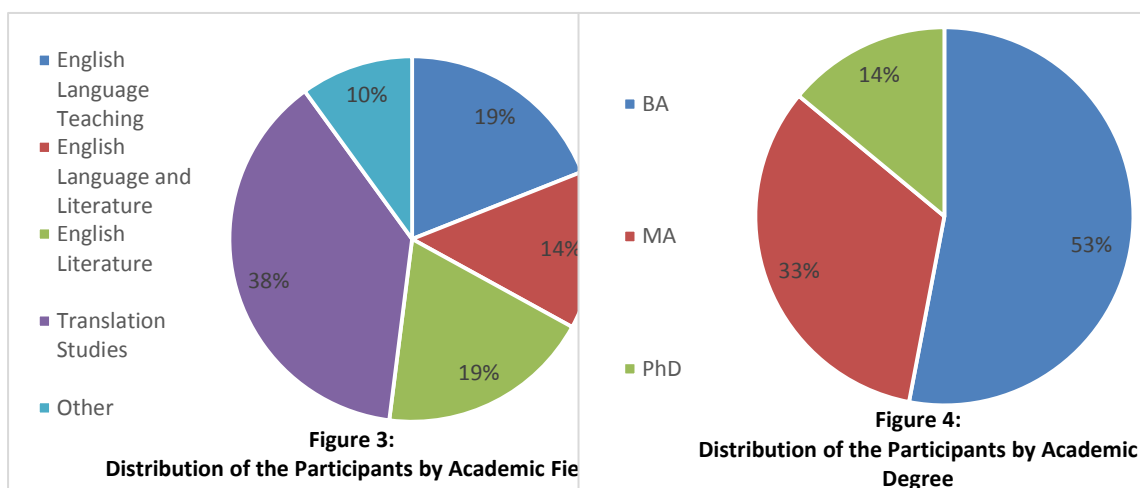
The main analytical tool is thematic analysis (TA). To (Braun and Clarke, 2006), this approach is specifically applicable for this research as it allows for identification, analysis, and reporting of the themes within data that describes the challenges in translating English figurative language in literary texts into Sorani-Kurdish. This study is selected in a way that real-world difficulties and lived experiences by professionals were examined. The goal of this paper is to move beyond individual stories toward a broader and deeper thematic comprehension of the translation process and challenges of figurative language in literary texts.

3.2 Participants and Sampling:

The selection of the participants for this study was conducted through purposive sampling, a non-probability technique chosen to ensure that the cohort possesses the specific expertise required to address the objectives of the study. This sample size of the study was determined according to the basic principles of thematic capacity, making sure that a depth of insight that balances each individual narrative with clearer academic styles. Sample consists of 21 professional translators comprising eight females and 13 males. In terms of gender, the cohort is predominantly male, comprising 13 males and 8 females while not perfectly balanced, and the gender distribution of the participants is representative rather than equal since the male translators currently hold a larger share in the field of literary translation in Kurdistan region. The age of the participants ranged from 25 years to 50 years. Ranging from four to 22 years of translation experience in the field of literary translation, selected from different cities in Kurdistan region including Erbil, Sulaimani, Kirkuk, Halabja and Kalar.



Maximum variation sampling strategy allowed for the inclusion of a wide range of academic backgrounds and professional contexts ensuring that the findings were not skewed by a single educational path or geographic location. Participants were required to meet strict inclusion criteria, including holding a BA, ME, or PhD degree in fields such as English language and literature, English language teaching (ELT), translation studies as well as interdisciplinary expertise from Medical Schools and Human Rights Programs.



The strategy of purposive sampling is utilized to select professional translators (N= 21). The participants (Translators) are selected based on the experience they have in translating literary works from English into Sorani-Kurdish. To capture a comprehensive insight into the challenges of translating figurative language in the process of translation, the sample included translators with varying years of experience (4-25 years). For



the purposefulness of this analysis, the participants are referred to as T1 through T21 in order to ensure anonymity.

3.3 Instrumentation:

As interviews are methods for collecting data and they are one of the techniques for gathering qualitative data. To (Kvale, 1996) interviews are conversations that have structures and purposes. Interviews are exclusively delicate and influential method for seizing the existed daily matters. The main instrument for this study was semi-structured interview. To (Creswell & Poth, 2018) believe that interviews are beneficial for uncovering the stories behind each participant's experience and it also allows the researcher to examine the depth information around a subject matter. This tool is to conduct rich and detailed narratives while maintaining a consistent focus across all the 21 cases. To (Guest, et al., 2006) after the 12th interview, new themes appear rarely while the essential elements of the experiences are often fully captured by the 15th or 16th participant. As the participants are specialists in English language and Literature, English Language Teaching (ELT), Translation Studies, Medical and Human Rights with BA, MA, and PhD holders, the interviews act as a bridge between theory and practice. Thus, according to (Patton, 2015), the quality of the information gained during interviews is mostly depends on the ability of the interviewer's capability to ask open-ended questions which let the participants to show their comprehension of the in their own terminologies. Therefore, the study reached thematic saturation in accordance with the findings of (Guest, et al., 2006), as they propose that in a relatively homogenous group of experts, 12 to 18 interviews re typically sufficient to capture the core themes. By the interviewing of the 21 participants, the research ensured a high level of 'interpretive power' (Braun & Clarke, 2013), allowing for a detailed information from BA, MA, and PhD holders and the targeted cities.

Regarding the validation of the interview questions, and to ensure the content validity of the instrument, the interview questions were peer-reviewed by seven university-level translation, literature, English language and linguistics experts and the pilot interview was tested with 3 senior translators not involved in the final study.

The interview was administered in the participants favorite language in which they mostly used Sorani-Kurdish language. This to ensure comfort and precision in expressing complicated linguistic and translation concepts.

4.Data Analysis

The qualitative data which is made from the 21 semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis (TA) in which the significant six-step recursive framework started by (Braun & Clarke, 2006) are followed by the researcher. This method was preferred for its theoretical elasticity and its systematic approach to identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) across a large and divisive dataset. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the cohort-comprising experts and translators who hold different degrees from different but somehow related academic degrees from different geographical locations, thematic analysis provides the necessary tools to distill a vast amount of professional discourse into a unified set of findings. The TA of the study went through the phases proposed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006) as also followed by the researcher are:

Phase 1: Familiarization and Transcription:

The analysis began with the transcription of 21 audio – recorded interviews. The phase assisted as the first step in the data immersion. By converting approximately 21 hours of dialogue in into written text, the researcher got an understanding of the nuances in the participants language. Each transcript was read and reread multiple times, with initial notes taken to document early impressions regarding the professional challenges faced by the translators in the above-mentioned cities.

Phase 2 and 3: Initial Coding and Searching for the themes

Once the researcher is familiarized with the data, initial coding was performed. This involved a line-by-line analysis and investigation for the 21 transcripts to identify themes and ideas – shorthand labels for meaningful segments of the text.

Phase 4 and 5: Reviewing, Defining, and Naming Themes:

The fourth involved difficult and demanding review of the themes to confirm that they correctly embodied the data from all the 21 participants. This stage performed as a check for quality control; themes that lacked adequate data were discarded, while others were collapsed into more vital categories. This process was essential to attaining thematic saturation, ensuring that the final themes here determined across the different educational levels (BA, MA, and PhD) and geographic locations. In phase 5 each theme was refined and given a definite name that captured



its essence and core, providing a well-defined conceptual map of the professional field been studied.

Phase 6: The final Report and Evidence Integration:

This final stage involved in the synthesis of the analyzed data into a proper and formal narrative. Verify the voice of the participants remained central to the study, the report adds intense, evidentiary quotes from the 13 males on seven female translators. These direct quotations provide thick description allowing the reader to see the raw data that supports the researcher's conclusions. By following this systematic six step-process, the study ensures that its findings are not only anecdotal but are based on a clear and verifiable analytical journey.

5.Findings:

Thematic Analysis of Translator Interviews on Translating English-Kurdish Figures of Speech in literary Texts

This section details a qualitative thematic analysis conducted on 21 semi-structured interviews. Adopting an inductive coding approach, the study adhered to the six-phase framework established by Braun and Clarke (2006). This rigorous analytical process ensured methodological consistency with established qualitative standards, ultimately facilitating the identification and categorization of the specific themes presented below.

Themes Related to the Challenges of Translating Figurative Expression from English into Kurdish

Theme 1: The Difficulty of Figurative Thickness in Literary Translation

In translation, literary texts stand apart because they are basically built upon figurative language. Unlike historical or political writings, which prioritize facts, literary texts rely on these expressions to add an emotional depth. While the density and thickness of using figurative expression varies depending on the author's style, it is common to face a new figure of speech at least once in every couple of pages, if not within every single passage as a translator says "*I confront figures of speech More often than I would want.*" This constant presence of figurative language creates a unique environment for the translator since a literary text is expected to be filled with imagery. It is determined reality that

makes the work for the translator both an enjoyment of art and a continuous struggle to maintain clarity within a sea of figurative expressions.

Theme 2: The Knowledge Gap in Recognizing Figurative Expression:

A significant challenge for the translators is the common lack of formal knowledge regarding the specific types of figurative language. While many translators have a natural feeling for translating a text, but they often struggle to identify the figures of speech and to recognize the technical differences among the figures of speech. The lack of theoretical understanding turns the translation process into a more difficult struggle. The struggle of translating figurative expressions often begins long before a single word is translated into the TL; it begins with the failure to identify the figurative expressions in the first place. When a translator lacks knowledge to recognize the subtle existence of the figures of speech, those figures of speech often lose meaning or mistranslate or get translated as literal statements or strange phrasing.

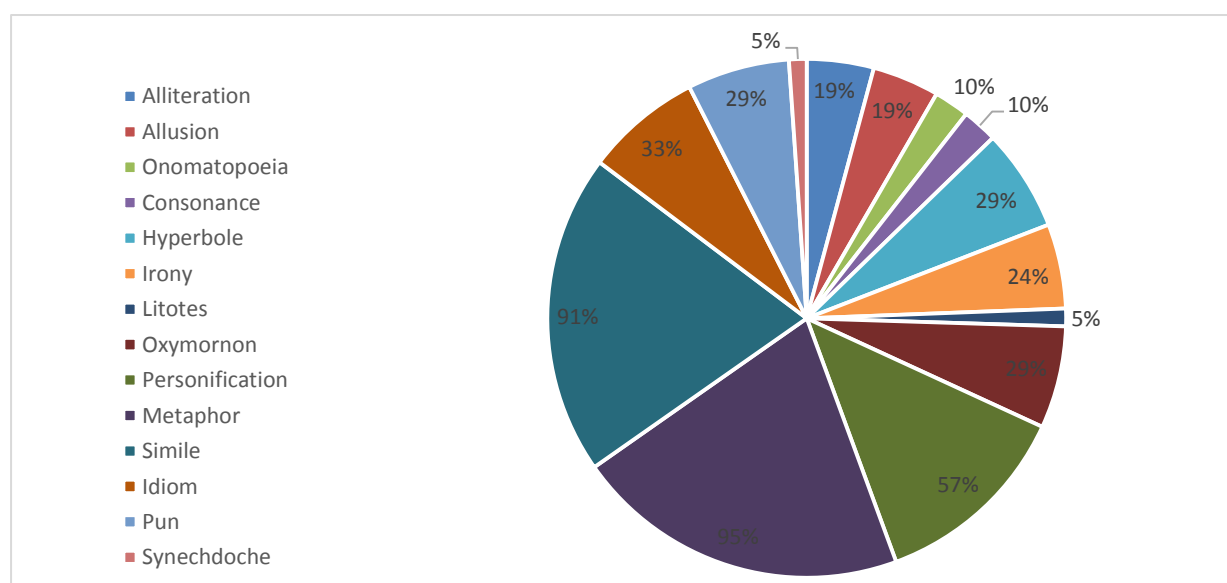


Figure 5: The Knowledge Gap in Recognizing Figurative Expression among Interviewed Translators

The above figure shows that 95 % of the translators recognize metaphors, and 91 % of them can recognize simile, while 57% of the translators can identify personification, and 33 % of the translators can identify the idioms. Moreover 29% of the participants could recognize hyperbole and puns, and oxymoron. While 24% of the participants are able to identify the irony. As for Alliterations and allusions, only 19% of the translators



could recognize them, while onomatopoeia and consonance are recognized by only 10 % of the translators. While only 5% of the participants could recognize litotes and synecdoche. As for anaphora, epizeuxis, apostrophe, assonance, dysphemism, ellipsis, euphemism, epigram, epiphora, hypophora, epithets, and metonymy; none of the translators who are interviewed mentioned them to recognize or identify since they are regarded as the most common figures of speech used among authors in writing their literary works, but *“We may not identify the most common figures of speech in literary texts, since they are neither taught nor mentioned in studying curricula at university.”* As one of the translators mentioned.

Theme 3: The Search for the Right Match and Finding Equivalence:

One of the most frequent difficulties in translating figurative expressions is the absence of a direct counterpart in the TL. The most challenging aspect of translating figurative language as mentioned by one of the translators is *“Finding the equivalences in target language.”* While another translator said *“Translators often confront figurative expressions that have no equivalence in the TL, making it nearly impossible to find an identical match in the TL.”* Therefore, when an exact meaning is hard to capture, the translator is forced to hunt for an equivalent that doesn't naturally exist, leading to an endless struggle to bridge the gap between the two different languages.

Theme 4: The Cultural wall; Local Context or Literal Words

Another difficulty of translating the figurative expressions among the translators is that figurative expressions are deeply tied to the local traditions and local culture, which often makes them untranslatable. As one of the translators states that *“Finding an equivalent in your target language is the difficult part even though it is not the most difficult compared to expressions that are local and limited to a specific time and place.”* Because to most of the translators, the local time, place and culture that most of the translators get stuck in, is a dilemma of either translating the figurative expressions literally, or rendering the hidden cultural meaning. Since the local or cultural expressions are distinctive to their original home and culture, therefore finding a way to make sense to foreign readers without losing their soul and flavor is one of the main professional challenges that the translators face.

Theme 5: Preserving Sense or Effect

A successful translator is doing more than just swapping the words and rendering them in the TL; as most of the translators believe that they must create the same emotional effect as much as they can and as much as the second language allows. An important challenge is ensuring that the new reader feels the same mood, the same effect as the original reader did, as a translator states *“Another challenge is that figurative language often creates moods that can be difficult to recreate in another language.”* Therefore, if the meaning is technically right but the sense or vibe is lost; the translation fails. And that is why another translator claims that *“The translator must work hard to keep the same sense and effect in the TT.”* Thus, translating figurative expressions require the translator to balance the exact definition of the phrase with the artistic goal of creating a similar impact in the TL text.

Theme 7: Recreating the Style, Sound and Rhythm

In literary texts, how a sentence sounds is just as significant as what it says. Translators face a huge struggle when trying to recreate wordplay, rhymes, and the musical rhythm of the SL text. As one of the translators said *“Attempting to preserve the same style and aesthetics while trying to translate figurative language in two different cultures who have different readers that would process the figurative language expressions differently, is regarded very struggling.”* While another translator believes that *“Sound is definitely a challenge, because it often alters how I would otherwise phrase something. The layer of sound within a sentence can require adjustments that, to me, sometimes feel like a compromise.”* This means that trying to preserve the musicality of the SL text and also staying accurate to the meaning is one of the hardest parts of translating the figurative expressions. Also keeping the author’s distinctive style and artistic beauty need a high level of creativity that goes far beyond merely looking up words in a dictionary.

Theme 8: The Lack of English-Kurdish Figurative Lexicon

A critical theme emerging from the interviews is the profound absence of specialized English-Kurdish reference materials specifically dedicated to figurative language and figurative expressions in literary texts. Translators emphasized that while general bilingual dictionaries exist, there is a total lack of comprehensive source or dictionary of figurative expressions that offers standardized Kurdish equivalents for English figurative expressions. This void forces translators into a state of linguistic isolation where they must rely entirely on their intuition and





memory rather than established scholarly standards. As one participant noted that *“Aside from some papers and pamphlets we took during our university classes, there is no published and valid source about English-Kurdish figurative expressions for translators to depend on or to be used during the process of translation, which is one of the most technical challenges we face as translators.”* This lack of written resources leads to a significant inconsistency across the field. Without a central reference, two translators might render the same English figurative expression in two completely different ways, leading to a fragmented literary landscape. The data suggests that this challenge is particularly hard for new translators who have no map to follow. One interviewee highlighted the danger of this resource gap, comparing it to a lack of historical guidance stating that *“No one will tell you how to resolve these issues or that the translation has been done thousands of times before you have even tried.”* This self-reliance often leads to literalism as the translators lack a written authority to justify more creative, functional adaptations. This theme ultimately highlights an urgent need for the academic and professional community to document and standardize English-Kurdish figurative translations to bridge this knowledge gap.

Theme 9: The Hierarchy of Challenging Figurative Expressions

The difficulty of literary translation exists where some figurative expressions are considerably more problematic than others. According to the interviewed translators, at the top of this difficulty are metaphors, idioms, puns, and sound related figurative expressions. These are not merely decorative elements; they are profoundly embedded in the SL language and culture, making them resistant and sometimes completely immune-to a simple swap into the TL.

According to the translators being interviewed, the most challenging figurative expression are metaphors, and idioms by 33% of the translators, followed by puns and alliterations with 29% of the translators, and 19% of the translators believe that assonance and consonance are the most challenging ones, while 5% of the translators believe that allusions and litotes and the most challenging, while 10% of the translators believe that the difficulty of translating the figurative expressions depends on the figurative expression itself not the type of the figurative expression.

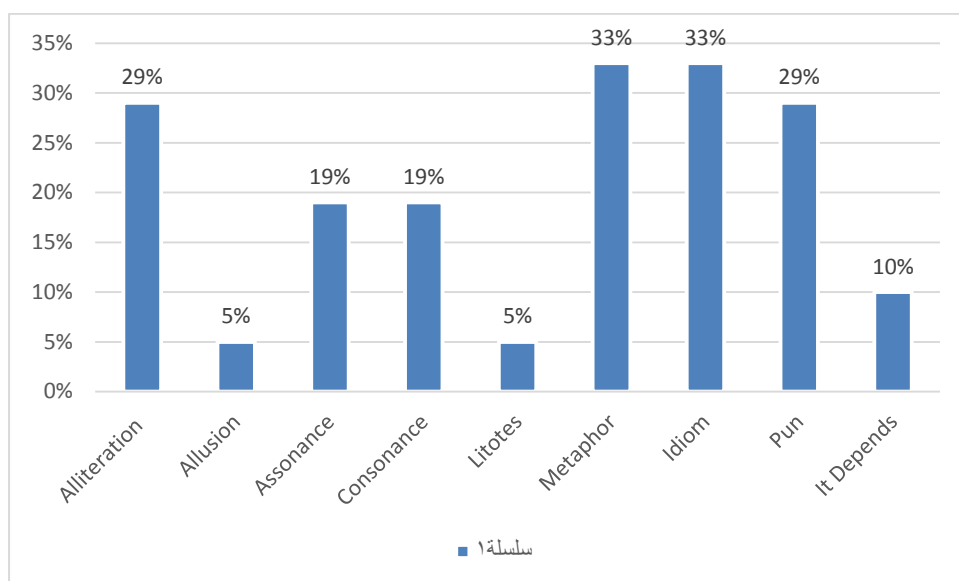


Figure 7: The Most Challenging Figurative Expressions by the Interviewed Translators

6. Discussions:

The findings from the thematic analysis of the interviews reveal that translating figures of speech is not merely a linguistic exchange but a multi-dimensional challenge involving cognitive, cultural and technical hurdles. The following discussion analyzes the essential themes surrounding these challenges, highlighting the complexities fundamental in preserving the figurative soul of the ST. The very primary theme emerging from the data is the difficulty posed by the high density and thickness of figures of speech in the literary texts. Participants notes that when a text is soaked with figurative expressions, the mental load on the translator increases exponentially. This thickness forces the translator to move beyond simple decoding to a state of constant stylistic compromise. The challenge lies in preserving the aesthetic flow of the literary text while simultaneously solving complex linguistic problems. As the frequency of these expressions rises, so does the risk of translation loss. Translators also noted that if a figurative expression is not recognized as a literal device, it is often misinterpreted as a non-literal statement. This identification gap is frequently linked to a lack of formal training in literary devices. Without the ability to distinguish between alliteration, allusion, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, irony, litotes, oxymoron, personification, metaphor, simile, idiom pun, synecdoche, and many more, the translator may not be able to choose the appropriate procedure to move forward. This rational obstacle acts as a silent error where the translators may produce a grammatically correct sentence that completely misses the author's intended figurative meaning, thereby



stripping the text of its depth before the translation process even truly begins.

Once a figurative expression is identified; the most persuasive practical challenge is the absence of an identical equivalent match in the TL. Participants expressed that many figures of speech are culture-bound rooted in specific history, environment, and social norms of the SL. When a direct equivalent does not exist in the TL, translators face a difficult choice between Nida (1960)'s 'formal equivalence' which is keeping the original words or the 'functional equivalence' which is finding a similar meaning with the same effect. the findings suggest that forced literalism in these cases often result in odd expressions that fail to resonate with the target audience. The lack of one-to-one match requires a high degree of creative intervention, which many translators find to be the most stressful and time- consuming aspect of tier work as translators.

Moreover, beyond the transfer of basic meaning, the interviews revealed a significant struggle in preserving the sense, effect, style, sound and rhythm of the original figurative expression. Translators emphasized that a figure of speech is not just a carrier of information; it is a stylistic tool designed to evoke a specific emotional response or aesthetic flavor. For example, a specific figure of speech in a poem might depend on a specific rhythm that is lost when translated into a language with different phonetic structure. Participants also reported that while they could often translate the sense of the literal meaning, they frequently struggled to maintain the effect and impact on the reader and the sound which is the musicality of the language. The loss of stylistic integrity can result in a flat translation that, while accurate in content, but fails to reproduce the literary beauty and rhythmic complexity of the SL text.

Besides, a significant obstacle identified is the shortage of specialized reference materials specifically designed to bridge the gap between English and Kurdish figurative systems. Unlike major European languages that benefit from thorough dictionaries of literary and figurative expressions, Kurdish translators often operate in a lexicographical emptiness. Participants stated that the lack of a standardized source for figurative expressions forces them to rely on individual intuition rather than established linguistic models or standards. Without a formal source to consult, translators are disposed to inconsistent renderings which not only slow down the translation process but also hinders the development of a unified professional standard with the academic and literally communities.

In brief, themes suggest that difficulty in translating figures of speech is cumulative. It begins with challenge of recognition, and frustrated by the

lack of direct cultural matches, then to the challenge of shortage of specialized English-Kurdish reference materials and concludes with the nearly impossible task or replicating the original author's unique stylistic pattern.

7.Conclusions:

In conclusion, this study has systematically explored the complex challenges that literary translators encounter when navigating the intense use of figurative language in English- Kurdish translation. The evidence gathered from the participants and the scores that the successful transposition of figurative expressions and other non-literal devices is a high stakes cognitive and creative endeavor that extends far beyond basic bilingual proficiency. It is a process that requires not only linguistic fluency but also a deep- seated cultural empathy and sophisticated command of literary aesthetics.

The research identified several critical barriers that hinder and delay the translation process. The most fundamental obstacle is the identification gap, where the inability to recognize figurative intent leads to reductive literalism that strips the source text of its intended depth meaning. This is worsened by cultural incommensurability, as the lack of direct equivalence in the Kurdish language forces translators into a difficult position of making significant functional shifts that may inadvertently alter the author's original voice. Furthermore, the struggle to achieve aesthetic preservation balancing the literal sense with the unique rhythm and styles of the original often results in a flattened TT that lacks the evocative power and emotion of the SL text.

Perhaps most significantly, the study highlights a systematic lexicographical shortage. Operating in an emptiness of source, in which without standard English-Kurdish figurative dictionary, translators are forced to rely on individual intuition. This lack of a documented scholarly standard not only increases the mental load on the translator but also leads to a lack of consistency across the field of translation in Kurdistan. Ultimately, these findings suggest that the current framework for English-Kurdish translation requires substantial structural and pedagogical support. By addressing gaps through the creation of specialized resources and a more rigorous focus on figurative competence in academic training, the field can move towards a more consistent and statistically faithful practice. Such advancements are essential for ensuring that the rich nuances of English literature are accurately and beautifully represented for the Kurdish- speaking audience, thereby enriching the cross- cultural literary dialogue.





8.Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the study, several strategic recommendations are proposed to enrich the quality and consistency of English-Kurdish figurative translation. Primarily, there is an urgent necessity for the development of standardized lexicographical resources. Academic institutions, in collaboration with linguistics and professional translators should prioritize the gathering of comprehensive English Kurdish dictionaries specifically dedicated to figurative expressions and culture-bound expressions. Such a standard resource would fill the current lexicographical emptiness, reducing the translator's dependance on personal guesswork and ensuring that figurative nuances are preserved across various literary works.

Secondly, the study recommends a significant reformation of translation pedagogy. Curricular with translation departments should move beyond general language stick fluency and incorporate a more demanding focus on figurative competence. This includes dedicated modules on identifying non-literal devices or figurative expressions and practicing specific translation strategies and procedures. By integrating these theoretical frameworks with practical, workshop-based learning, universities can better equip students to handle the mental load associated with dense and thick literary texts. Providing students with a methodology for untangling figurative expressions will bridge the gap between academic theory and professional practice.

Finally, the establishment of a professional guild or body in Kurdistan region is recommended to foster a community of practice. Such an organization could host regular seminars and peer review forms where translators can share solutions to difficult figurative expressions and other translation-related issues. This would transform translation from an isolated, individual struggle into a collaborative scholarly effort. Furthermore, encouraging publishers to provide translators with more generous timelines would allow for the deep research required to maintain the aesthetic and rhythmic integrity of SL texts. Implementing these structural and educational changes will not only support individual translators but will also elevate the status of Kurdish literature in the globalized literary field as well.





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Journal of Babylon Center for Humanities Studies: 2026, Volume: 16, Issue: 10



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