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**A LITTLE OFF THE BEATEN TRACK –**  
Translation of Idioms in Sherlock Holmes Stories in Two  
Finnish Translations

# ABSTRACT

Pauliina Viljanen: A Little Off the Beaten Track – Translation of Idioms in Sherlock Holmes Stories in Two Finnish Translations  
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The subject of this bachelor's thesis is the translation of idioms and the translation strategies in two different translations of Sherlock Holmes short stories. Idioms are stabilised groups of words, which have a metaphorical meaning and they often cannot be translated literally. The analysis in this thesis is based on the combination of Baker's translation strategies for idioms, and Delabastita's translation techniques for puns. These were complemented by three additional categories.

The thesis examines the different methods professional translators have utilised while translating idioms in vivid, fictional literature by categorising the translation strategies discovered in the text. The purpose is to make visible the creative skills of translators in the diverse field of translating idioms. In addition, the purpose is to determine the contribution of each translation strategy in the two different translations.

In total there were 137 idioms in the material, and their 274 translations. The most popular translation strategy was replacing an idiom with a synonym (33%), and the second most popular strategy was using a dissimilar idiom, which has a different form but a similar meaning (14%). The creativity of translators was particularly evident in explicitation and in creative translation, as well as in the use of rhetorical devices and fixed expressions. Entire omission was utilised sparingly, covering only 5% of the cases.

In the study there were 12 categories of translation strategies for idioms in total, reflecting the extensive competence of the translators. Although a translator might prefer one technique, he or she still needs to possess a wide range of methods to modify the many variations of language into fluent text. In the future, the analysis of the idioms could be further refined, the scope could be expanded to other texts, or the written and audio-visual versions of Sherlock Holmes could be compared.

Keywords: idioms, translation of idioms, translation strategies, Sherlock Holmes stories

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# TIIVISTELMÄ

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Tämä kandidaatintutkielma käsittelee idiomien kääntämistä ja käännösstrategioita kahdessa eri Sherlock Holmesin tarinoiden käännöksessä. Idiomit ovat vakiintuneita sanayhdistelmiä, joilla on metaforinen merkitys ja joita usein ei voi kääntää sananmukaisesti. Tutkielman analyysissä yhdistetään Bakerin laatimia idiomien käännösstrategioita ja Delabastitan kehittämiä sanaleikkien käännöstekniikoita. Näitä täydennetään kolmella lisäkategorialla.

Tutkielma tarkastelee, millaisin eri metodein ammattikäntäjät ovat kääntäneet idiomeja eläväsissä, fiktiivisessä kirjallisuudessa, luokittelemalla niitä käännösstrategioita, joita käännöksistä löytyy. Tarkoitus on tehdä näkyväksi kääntäjien luovaa osaamista idiomien moninaisessa kääntämisessä. Tämän lisäksi tarkoitus on selvittää kunkin käännösstrategian osuutta idiomien kääntämisessä kahdessa eri suomennoksessa.

Materiaalista löytyi 137 idiomia, joiden käännösten yhteenlaskettu lukumäärä oli 274. Yleisimmäksi käännösstrategiaksi osoittautui idiomien korvaaminen synonyymilla (33 %), ja toiseksi yleisimmäksi ulkomuodoltaan erilaisen, mutta merkitykseltään samankaltaisen suomalaisen idiomien käyttäminen (14 %). Kääntäjien luovuus tuli esille erityisesti selittävien ja luovien käännösten yhteydessä sekä retoristen tehokeinojen ja vakiintuneiden ilmausten käyttämisessä. Täyden poiston osuus jäi vähäiseksi, sillä se kattoi vain 5 % tapauksista.

Tässä tutkielmassa idiomien käännösstrategioita kertyi yhteensä 12 kategoriaa, mikä kertoo kääntäjien laajasta osaamisesta. Vaikka kääntäjä voikin suosia yhtä tekniikkaa, on häneltä silti löydettävä laaja valikoima eri keinoja kielen moninaisen vaihtelun sujuvaksi tekstiksi muokkaamisessa. Tulevaisuudessa analyysia voisi idiomien osalta kehittää vielä tarkemmaksi, laajentaa tutkimusaluetta muihin teksteihin, tai vertailla esimerkiksi Sherlock Holmesin kirjallisia ja audiovisuaalisia versioita keskenään.

Avainsanat: idiomit, idiomien kääntäminen, käännösstrategiat, Sherlock Holmes

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin Originality Check -ohjelmalla.

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# 1 Introduction

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories are familiar to everyone who has been growing up under the influence of Western culture. The stories of the books have been repeated in several TV-series and movies of the famous detective, and the stories of Sherlock Holmes have inspired countless adaptations whether in different locations or with a different cast. One could say that Sherlock Holmes and his friend John Watson are a crucial part of the shared knowledge of popular culture, even if one has never read any of Conan Doyle's books.

This thesis, on the other hand, focuses on the original written short stories of Sherlock Holmes. Conan Doyle published four novels and 56 short stories of Sherlock Holmes' and Doctor Watson's adventures between the years 1887 and 1927. I am using a collection of the short stories called *The Best of Sherlock Holmes* (1998) which includes the most famous of the short stories (Davies 1998, xiii). I will take a closer look at two Finnish translations of the stories: the earlier one is translated by O. E. Juurikorpi in 1957, and the latter by Jaakko Anhava in 2010. My focus is on identifying idioms in the original text and studying the ways in which they have been translated into Finnish in the two translations.

I became interested in idioms when I noticed how culturally connected many of them are and how their translation depends strongly on cultural aspects. Idioms usually have an idiomatic meaning besides their literal meaning, and they often cannot be translated literally (Baker 2018, 72). Idioms bring colour to the text, and they are a natural part of any language. On that note, the goal of this thesis is to see how established, professional translators have translated idioms in their work and what kind of translation strategies they have been using in the translations of idioms.

Using two different translators of the same text widens the view as there are no strict rules of how idioms should be translated, and they rely heavily on the translators' creativity. Translator's creativity is a sometimes-overlooked quality of a translator's skills and competence, and the way that the idioms are translated in the text can make it or break it. An interesting part of this research is to see if the Finnish idioms have been included in the target texts or if idioms have primarily been omitted in the translations. Sherlock Holmes stories were chosen as the research material because Conan Doyle utilises vivid language in his stories so the chance of finding idioms is high.

This bachelor's thesis is divided into six chapters, beginning with this introduction. In the second chapter, I will focus on the definition of idioms and fixed expressions and discuss the transparency of idioms and their translation. In chapter three I will introduce translation strategies concerning idioms. Chapter four covers the materials and methods used in this thesis and chapter five reports in detail the translation strategies used in the two translations of Sherlock Holmes stories. Finally in chapter six, I will draw a conclusion of the study and discuss the findings of the thesis as well as the problems that the study has made visible.

## 2 Theoretical Background of Idioms and Translation

### 2.1 Definition of Idioms

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary provides a short definition for idioms:

a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words *'Let the cat out of the bag' is an idiom meaning to tell a secret by mistake.*

The Helsinki Term Bank for Arts and Sciences offers almost the same definition for idioms in Finnish as The Oxford Learner's Dictionary but narrows down "a group of words" to "longer than a word but shorter than a sentence". It also mentions that the definition is not unambiguous because some compound words can be idiomatic (Tieteen termipankki, 2024). The observation of the idiomatic compound words in Finnish is valid, for example, the Finnish expression "kissanristiäiset" looks very much like an idiom but it consists of one compound word. However, Tiikki argues in her master's thesis that compound words do not belong to idioms in Finnish, although some compound words can be regarded as idiomatic or part-idiomatic compound words. Tiikki refers to Burger (1998, 54), who says that compound words have the status of a word rather than a phrase and for that reason they are not part of phraseology, which includes the idioms (Tiikki 2003, 15). Bearing that in mind, idioms are regarded to form a group of at least two words also in this thesis.

Also The Term Bank's definition that idioms are shorter than a sentence is problematic. The definition rules out proverbs because they are often full sentences like *'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush'*, but a definite line between an idiom and a proverb is often difficult to draw. Mäntylä argues that instead of focusing on the structure of an idiom, nowadays the most notable feature of an idiom is its metaphoricity (Mäntylä 2004, 13-14). Many scholars, along with Baker, describes that the requirement for an idiom is that its meaning is different to the

meaning of its individual words – it has a metaphorical meaning which cannot entirely be derived from its components (Baker 2018, 69).

According to Mäntylä, the traditional definition of an idiom has been “frozen, multi-word expressions that tolerate little or no (structural) variation” (Mäntylä 2004, 13). Idioms are also regarded as dead expressions, meaning that the connection to their origin has disappeared (Mäntylä 2004, 27). Mäntylä argues that this definition had changed over the years to focus more on the meaning and the function of the idiom (Mäntylä 2004, 13). For example, the definition of idioms as frozen, because of their fairly fixed form which allows hardly any variation, is not regarded as totally valid any more. Mäntylä argues that the number of completely fixed idioms is limited and that idioms do tolerate lexical and grammatical transformation. (Mäntylä 2004, 14, 27).

Fixedness is connected to the concept of institutionalisation. Moon argues that the requirement for an expression to be included in a dictionary, is that it has had to become institutionalised (Moon 2008, 132). Institutionalisation is a process, where an idiom “becomes recognised and accepted as a lexical item of the language” (Moon 1998, 7). But Moon also detects that there are variations of idioms, and some dictionaries mention that speakers of the language may play with idioms by coming up with their own versions of familiar idioms. Moon gives an example of an idiom ‘*it drives me crazy / nuts / mad / up the wall / bananas*’, which are all variations of the same idiom (Moon 2008, 146). Baker also agrees that some idioms are more flexible than others, and for many native professional writers the attempt to play with words in idioms is rather common (Baker 2018, 69).

## **2.2 Transparency of Idioms**

Mäntylä has presented a categorisation of idioms into three groups according to how transparent the idioms are. If an idiom is *transparent*, it creates a clear image between its literal meaning and its metaphorical, figurative meaning. In the *semi-transparent* group some of the words in the idiom are used in their literal meaning but the link between the literal meaning and the figurative meaning is less obvious. In the *least transparent* group are the so-called *opaque* idioms, where none of the words in the idiom are used in their literal meaning. Their meaning is impossible to detect without knowing the idiom or without an explanation. (Mäntylä, 2004, 29).

The transparent idioms are often comparisons, for example, *as quiet as a mouse*, or *as free as a bird*, but they can also be very descriptive idioms, like *see face to face*, or *give the green light*. The semi-transparent idioms provide hints of their meaning, for example, *let someone off the hook*, or *disappear into thin air*. They are still quite possible to understand even if one does not know the idiom beforehand. The opaque idioms are the ones which cause the most problems for understanding. They can be difficult for second language learners and also for translators, because a literal translation is impossible. Examples of these could be *hit out of the park* (did a great job), *be on the ball* (be very aware of what is happening) or *a red herring* (a misleading tip or a distraction).

### **2.3 Fixed Expressions**

According to Baker, fixed expressions behave much like idioms as they allow very little or no change in form, but unlike idioms their meaning is often fairly transparent, denoting that they are easy to understand even if the expression is unfamiliar to the reader/hearer (Baker 2018, 70). Fixed expressions would be expressions like *as a matter of fact*, *on the other hand*, *having said that*, *to name a few*, *yours sincerely*, etc. Yet, the meaning of a fixed expression has to be considered as one unit, and a fixed expression stimulates associations of situations where it is typically expressed (Baker 2018, 70). Unlike idioms, fixed expressions do not “violate truth conditions”, as one can notice in the idiom *it’s raining cats and dogs*, which is physically impossible (Baker 2018, 71). Instead, fixed expressions have a stabilising function in communication with their stereotypical phraseology (Baker 2018, 70).

### **2.4 Translation of Idioms**

Translation of idioms may create many difficulties for a translator. Baker states that recognizing an idiom is the translator’s first difficulty, because idioms vary in style and are sometimes difficult to recognise. The second problem is interpreting the idiom correctly. Most idioms have both literal and idiomatic meaning, and a translator might miss the two meanings of the idiom if he or she only recognises the literal one (Baker 2018, 72-73). The author’s deliberate word play with idioms might make it even more difficult for the translator to recognise and identify an idiom or correctly interpret its meaning (Baker 2018, 70-71). The third difficulty is to find a suitable translation in the target language. Baker claims that interpreting an idiom and translating it differs fundamentally, because in translation it does not matter if the idiom is

transparent or opaque. Some opaque idioms may be even easier to translate than transparent ones. The question is whether the said idiom has an equivalent in the target language or not (Baker 2018, 73). As languages express various meanings differently, Baker warns that the expectation to find equivalent idiom in all of the cases in the target language is “unrealistic”. Idioms and fixed expressions are culture-specific and even idioms which look the same on the surface in two languages can hold a different meaning in their respective cultures. Also the context of an idiom affects how it is used in different languages (Baker 2018, 72-74).

According to Baker, the conventions of using idioms in written discourse differ in context and frequency between different cultures. English uses idioms in several types of texts: in advertisements and the tabloid press, but also in serious contexts such as in science and research. The heavy use of idioms is typical of the English language, and literature is not an exception to this (Baker 2018, 76). Some other languages, on the other hand, might attempt to avoid idioms in the context of a “high level of formality” (Baker 2018, 77). Baker mentions that according to Fernando and Flavell (1981, 85), the translation of idioms requires especially high sensitivity “to the rhetorical nuances of the language” (Baker 2018, 77). Some languages might express the same thing with a fixed expression, some with a single word and some with the use of an idiom (Baker 2018, 73).

The nature of idioms has been a somewhat popular subject for research in English speaking countries. The translation of idioms are usually separate studies connected to different languages, such as Portuguese, Russian, or German. In Finland, there has not been so much research of the translation of English idioms into Finnish. Mäntylä (2004) has examined the recognition of idioms by native and non-native speakers of English. Tiikki (2003) has written her master’s thesis on the translation of German idioms into Finnish. Ruhanen (2015) has written her second subject thesis on the animal expressions in English idiom dictionaries. These studies have a connection to translating English idioms into Finnish, but they do not cover it fully. Metsola (2016) has researched the translation of address terms in the two translations of Sherlock Holmes in her master’s thesis. The translation of idioms from English to Finnish in fiction seems to have plenty of room for more research.

### **3 Translation Strategies of Idioms**

Next I will take a look at the translation strategies which can be utilised while translating idioms. Translation strategies are the tools for translators to solve a particular kind of

communication problem (Chesterman 2016, 85). Leppihalme describes translation as a process of problem-solving and decision-making with the translator's expert skills of language (Leppihalme 1997, 19). Partly the same kind of translation strategies are used in all translation. To receive an understanding of the typical translation strategies used while translating idioms, I will refer to two sets of strategies from Baker and Delabastita.

Baker has collected six translation strategies used by professional translators in the translation of idioms. According to Baker, the use of any strategy depends greatly on the context. Style, register, and rhetorical effect are something to be considered while choosing a suitable strategy for an idiom (Baker 2018, 77). Here is a direct quote of Baker's strategies (Baker 2018, 77-86):

- a) Using an idiom of similar meaning and form
- b) Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form
- c) Borrowing the source language idiom
- d) Translation by paraphrase (not an idiom but synonym in meaning)
- e) Translation by omission of a play on idiom (literal translation)
- f) Translation by omission of entire idiom

Even though translating an idiom with a similar idiom in meaning and form seems like an ideal situation, it can only occasionally happen in practise (Baker 2018, 77). A translator is more likely to find an idiom in the target language which has a similar meaning, but its lexical items differ, so it appears different externally (Baker 20018, 79). This does not mean that the value of the dissimilar idiom would be any less of the similar idiom in the target text as long as its function suits the context.

An English speaker might use an idiom *out of the frying pan and into the fire* to express moving from bad to even worse. The saying as it is does not exist in Finnish, but a Finnish speaker might say that someone ended up *ojasta allikkoon*. If it fits the context, it could be used instead of trying to translate the English idiom word for word. However, there are many translation situations where using a similar or dissimilar idiom is impossible, and in those situations the other strategies become crucial. Baker states that translating an idiom with a synonym is the most common way of translating idioms when a target language idiom cannot be found, or it would feel "inappropriate" to use it in the context (Baker 2018, 81).

Delabastita's translation strategies are widely used in the study of translation, and they form a basis for many other researchers, for example, Leppihalme and Mateo. Delabastita focused on translating puns and wordplays, but his categorisation is adaptable to other translation situations

as well. I am looking at Delabastita's translation strategies partly through Ritala's master's thesis. Delabastita's strategies are (Ritala 2010, 22-24):

- 1) Pun → Pun
- 2) Pun → Non-pun
- 3) Pun → A similar rhetorical device (alliteration, assonance, repetition, irony, paradox, rhyme, metaphor, allusion)
- 4) Pun → Null (omission)
- 5) Pun ST (source text) → Pun TT (target text): direct transfer of the pun
- 6) Non-pun → Pun (a pun is added to the TT where there is something else in the ST)
- 7) Null → Pun (a pun is added to the TT to compensate the lost puns elsewhere in the text)
- 8) Additional notes (to give extra information inside brackets, in footnotes or in prologue)

Some of these categories are the same with Baker and Delabastita. However, Delabastita has more categories for different methods of replacing a pun with other linguistic ways such as with a rhetorical device using alliteration, allusion, etc., or by adding something else to the text. Delabastita also notices the possibility of using footnotes or brackets to give extra information to the reader. These are all suitable methods for translating idioms as well.

Delabastita's strategies also include the compensation strategy (Null → Pun). Chesterman explains that in compensation a translator may decide to omit or change something at one point of the text and compensate it by adding something else to another part of the text. A translated text needs to be observed as a whole, and not just as smaller units of language, and therefore compensation can balance the omitted parts elsewhere in the text (Chesterman, 2016, 112).

## **4 Material and Method**

In this chapter I will go through the material for this study in more detail and I will further explain the method that I will be using in analysing my collected data.

### **4.1 The Original and the Two Translations**

The material I am going to analyse using some of the translation strategies stated in the previous chapter are the first four short stories of the collection of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories called *The Best of Sherlock Holmes* (1998), which includes the most famous of the tales. As David Stuart Davies explains in the introduction, the short stories for the collection

have been selected by him with the help of the preferences of Conan Doyle himself and the public (Davies 1998, xiii), and they include the original illustrations from *The Strand Magazine*. The first four stories of the collection are “A Scandal in Bohemia”, “The Red-Headed League”, “The Five Orange Pips”, and “The Man with the Twisted Lip”. All together the four stories cover 89 pages of the book.

The two Finnish translations that I am analysing are from collections which include almost all the Sherlock Holmes short stories. The first one, *Sherlock Holmesin seikkailut* (1983), has been translated by O.E. Juurikorpi. Another book with the same name has been published in Finnish in 2014, but that one is a shorter collection although it also includes the four stories in question. This newer version mentions that the first Finnish translation of the book was published in 1933, and O.E. Juurikorpi's renewed translation was first published in 1957. It is unclear whether the collection published in 1983 is the same translation as the one published in 1957. The editor's introduction does not provide any extra information about the translation. There is seemingly little information available of Juurikorpi as a person, although he has translated most of the Sherlock Holmes stories and also F.E. Benson's *David Blaize and the Blue Door* in 1931.

The second translation is by Jaakko Anhava in a collection called *Sherlock Holmes kootut kertomukset* (2010). Jaakko Anhava is a well-known translator, and the translation has received support from FILI Finnish Literature Exchange and from The Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation. In the introduction Anhava mentions that the need for the new translation was acknowledged because the old translation has errors, omissions, and unnecessary additions by the translator (Anhava 2010, 13). The purpose of this thesis is not to make claims about the overall quality of the two translations but to focus on their different creative strategies in the translation of idioms. Both translations master very rich and varied language and together they provide plenty of material to analyse.

In the stories, Sherlock Holmes and his friend Dr Watson live in the Victorian-era London, and the stories that I examined mention the years 1887 and 1890. A typical story consists of a peculiar incident that Holmes and Watson attempt to solve with their detective skills. The language of the books is rather colourful, and Conan Doyle describes both the darker and the lighter aspects of society in an honest but fascinating manner. The description of the different layers of society, and the flexibility of how Holmes moves through them is one of the main attractions of the books, along with his expert ability to deduct things from the tiniest of clues.

## 4.2 Collection of the Data

The colourful language of the stories creates a good hunting ground for English idioms and great research material to examine how the idioms are translated into Finnish. In close reading of the four short stories, I collected 137 English idioms, and their two Finnish translations. Because the data provides two translations for every source text idiom, the overall number of the translations is 274. On top of that, I found 22 cases where an idiom had been used in Finnish translation though there was none in the source text. The two first short stories had the majority of the idioms in the original text, whereas the last two short stories had fewer idioms. To make the upcoming analysis easier to follow, I will abbreviate the source text as ST, the first translation as T1, and the second translation as T2.

While collecting the data, I focused on the idioms and idiomatic expressions that are not used in their literal meaning. Sometimes the choice was difficult to make, but I accepted idioms with a wider sense rather than with a narrow sense. Instead, I ruled out the clear similes or metaphorical expressions, where *“something” is like “something”*. An example of this from the ST would be: “...then diving down into the cellar **like a rabbit into its hole**”. (ST, 28) These kinds of metaphors are usually possible to translate word for word and their meaning is clear. On the other hand, I did collect the idioms that were in a form *as “something” as “something”*, like in example (1) presented in the next chapter, **as blind as a mole** (ST, 83). Even though these two examples look externally rather similar, there is a difference in their form and function and for that reason the latter example was accepted while the first was not.

To help me decide whether the selected expression was an idiom or not, I have used a simple Google search to examine the hits that the expression received. I have also used the Google Books Ngram Viewer to determine how commonly used the expression has been between the years 1800-2019. I have also used an English-Finnish Idiom Dictionary in some cases. Some of the idioms are rare in the form that Conan Doyle has used them, but more familiar in a slightly different form, for example, with a different word order. I have accepted those forms as variations of the same idiom. As Baker pointed out, writers tend to play with idioms despite of the requirement of institutionalisation. Also some of the idioms that Conan Doyle used are rather old-fashioned now, and not in common use any more.

After collecting the data, I categorised the translations according to the translation strategies, which I will present in the next sub-chapter. In chapter five, I will go through the examples and analyse them in a qualitative manner along with the quantitative percentage of each case.

### 4.3 The Combined Translation Strategies

The goal of this study is to discover and observe the translation strategies of idioms in a vivid fictional text. Translation of idioms in a creative text brings to the surface the complexity of translation strategies that the translators have to use, and the diversity of the language that skilled authors display. A detailed review of the translation strategies is essential.

Because of the various cases in the data, I decided to use my own combination of Baker's and Delabastita's translation strategies. Both Baker and Delabastita have useful categories for translating idioms and put together they cover most of the cases. Yet, some changes needed to be made. One of Delabastita's strategies, Pun ST → Pun TT, otherwise known as a direct transfer, where a pun is left untranslated, did not occur once in my data, so I removed it from my categories.

Also some of the cases in my data seemed to have utilised different kinds of strategies to those that were mentioned by Baker and Delabastita. I added three categories to the strategies to better cover the cases that I found. The added categories are explicitation, creative translation and fixed expression. In explicitation, the translator has explained the source language idiom in a comprehensive way to clarify the meaning of the idiom. This is not just finding a synonym expression in the target language but putting extra effort to explaining the meaning. In creative translation, the translator has added something new to the text, which is not an idiom, and it is something that the ST does not have. It can also mean a complete rewording of a sentence. In the case of fixed expression, the ST idiom is translated with a fixed expression in the TT.

With these changes, I completed with a 12-point category, which covers most of the cases in my data:

1. Idiom – Similar idiom: using an idiom of similar meaning and form
2. Idiom – Dissimilar idiom: using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form
3. Idiom – Borrowing: borrowing the source language idiom, translated as an idiom but not an institutionalised idiom in target language
4. Idiom – Synonym: Not an idiom, but a similar meaning
5. Idiom – Explicitation: not an idiom but a clarification of the meaning
6. Idiom – Other rhetorical device: the idiom is replaced by alliteration, etc.
7. Idiom – Literal translation: not an idiom
8. Idiom – Omission: idiom is omitted entirely

9. Idiom – Fixed expression: idiom is translated with a fixed expression
10. Idiom – Creative translation: addition of something else
11. Idiom – Additional notes: translation includes extra information in brackets, in footnote or in prologue
12. No idiom – Compensation idiom: idiom in TT though no idiom in the ST

Some of these categories are very close to each other and it is possible that they could have been combined. But my purpose of this study is to examine the diversity of different translation strategies and the creativity of the translators, and from that point of view, the multiple categories enable me to uncover the diversity.

## 5 Translation strategies of Idioms in Sherlock Holmes Stories

In this chapter, I will discuss the different translation strategies in the two Finnish translations and give an example or examples of each strategy. Some strategies were very frequent while others had only one instance, but I will go through them all to cover the different methods used in the translations. The idiom in the ST example is written in bold, and the part of the Finnish translation that I identified as representing the translation of the idiom is written in italics in the Finnish example(s).

### 5.1 Translating Idiom with a Similar Idiom

As Baker pointed out, translating a source language idiom with a similar target language idiom seems like the ideal situation, but often this is not possible. Nevertheless, there were some cases in the data where the translation with an idiom with a similar form and meaning was successful, as in example (1).

- (1) ST: I confess I have been **as blind as a mole**, but it is **better** to learn wisdom **late than never** to learn it at all. (83)  
 T1: Myönnän olleeni *sokea kuin myyrä*, mutta onhan toki *parempi* viisastua *myöhään kuin ei milloinkaan*. (149)

This is a typical example of how Conan Doyle plays around with the idioms in the text. The whole line includes two different idioms and the second idiom *better late than never* is embedded in two sentences ‘*it is better to learn wisdom late, than never to learn it at all*’. This could have been a tricky sentence to translate but both of the idioms actually exist in Finnish, and on the second idiom the translator has kept the familiar Finnish idiom as it is and has left out the play with the two subclause sentences. Thus he has maintained both of the idioms in

similar form and meaning in the Finnish translation. The other translator employed a slightly different strategy here by using the expression “umpisokea” of the first idiom.

Translating an idiom with a similar idiom had 15 instances in the data, resulting to 5.5%. Both of the translators had an almost equal number of these cases. The two translators were surprisingly unanimous about the similar idioms, and often used the same Finnish idiom in the translation. That could be because the idioms in this group were mostly transparent and well institutionalised like the ones in example (1).

## 5.2 Translating Idiom with a Dissimilar Idiom

Rather than finding a similar idiom it is more likely that a source language idiom is translated with a dissimilar idiom because idioms vary from language to language and are tied to cultural features. Translating with a dissimilar idiom was the second most popular translation strategy with 37 cases in the data, resulting in 13.5% of the cases. This method was slightly more popular in T2. The two translators came up with rather different kinds of Finnish idioms, unlike in the group of similar idioms.

- (2) ST: I have had one or two little **scores** of my own **to settle** with Mr. John Clay. (44-5)  
T2: Minulla oli omasta takaa *kana* tai pari *kynittävä*nä herra John Clayn kanssa. (63)

In example (2), the translator has found a Finnish idiom with a same meaning with the English one, though the form is completely different. Instead of *settling a score* the Finnish language is feathering a chicken. The translator has also included the part *one or two* as *a chicken or two* which makes the idiom even more colourful in Finnish. These idioms are opaque in both English and Finnish, and their meaning cannot be deducted from the individual words.

Because finding a suitable idiom from the target language while translating, has a sense of success attached to it, here is a quick overview of other dissimilar idiom pairs found in the translations: *as true as Gospel* (26) – *tosi kuin vesi* (T2, 43), *came to an end* (33) – *loppui kuin veitsellä leikaten* (T1, 47), *hush this thing up* (89) – *painavan tämän villaisella* (T2, 148).

## 5.3 Borrowing an Idiom from the Source Language

Borrowing an idiom from the source language means translating it almost literally but the translation still creates a form that resembles a target language idiom, though the idiom is not institutionalised in a way that it would be widely recognised or accepted among the speakers of the language or exist in the idiom dictionaries. Borrowing is close to literal translation, and one

must be careful with the categorisation of these two – the difference is that literal translation of an idiom does not form an idiom in a target language.

Borrowing was not a popular strategy in my data; it appeared in 12 instances and covered 4.4% of the cases. Borrowing seemed to happen in cases where the source language idiom is rather descriptive and transparent, making it easy to understand even though one is not familiar with the idiom, but it does not have near equals in Finnish language.

- (3) ST: It is a little **off the beaten track**, isn't it? (27)  
T2: Tässä *ei kuljetakaan* aivan *tavanomaisilla poluilla*, vai kuinka? (44)

In this example, the translator has preserved the noun *track* from the original idiom and explained that we are not treading on the most usual tracks here. In the ST the idiom is used in a sense that the case presented to Sherlock Holmes is out of the ordinary or unusual, which amuses Sherlock. The Finnish translation catches the same meaning but the idiom itself is not widely known in Finnish and therefore not institutionalised. Another example from the text is not as straightforward:

- (4) ST: It's **as true as gospel**. (26)  
T1: Sillä totta on, *totta kuin evankeliumi*, (39)

According to the Google search, the Finnish translation, *totta kuin evankeliumi*, is found in translations of some other, usually older books. Yet, I would not classify it as a common Finnish idiom but regard it as borrowing. It may have been used in translations of literature in earlier days, but the expression has not spread widely in vernacular speech, or it has been forgotten over the years, thus it is not institutionalised.

## 5.4 A Synonym Expression with no Idiom

Translating an idiom with a word or an expression which can be seen as a synonym to the idiom, but does not form an idiom in Finnish, is by far the most popular translation strategy in this study. The strategy occurred for 90 times of the cases (33%). This method was especially popular in T2 with 40% of the cases. In T1 it formed 25.5% of the cases, but it was still the most commonly used strategy in T1 as well.

The English language tends to use idioms in a slightly different way than Finnish. Idioms are more common in English, and many of them do not have an equivalent in Finnish. Finnish idioms might cover culturally specific circumstances which are different for English speakers. Baker mentions that synonyms were the most common option for translating an idiom, when a

match could not be found (Baker 2018, 81). This could be seen in my data as well, where many idioms were replaced with synonyms with no idiom.

- (5) ST: ... where occasionally, indeed, there is **room for doubt** as to whether any positive crime has been committed. (25)  
T1: Tapahtuma sinänsä saattaa joskus vaikuttaa niin mitättömältä ja jokapäiväiseltä, *ettei* aluksi edes *voi olla varma*, onko mitään rikosta yleensä tehtykään. (38)  
T2: onpa joskus suorastaan *aihetta epäillä*, onko mitään varsinaista rikosta niitten yhteydessä tehtykään. (42)

Here the idiom *room for doubt* has been translated with expressions *ei voi olla varma* (can't be sure) and *aihetta epäillä* (a reason to doubt). They cover the meaning of the English idiom but are slightly less noticeable expressions. Often synonyms are also shorter in Finnish than the English idiom. This is exceptional, because usually translated Finnish text is longer than the equivalent English one. It is possible, that instead of finding a suitable idiom, the translators have tried to find a shorter way to express the point of the idiom in long sentences.

- (6) ST: I **lent** the ostlers **a hand** in rubbing down their horses (11)  
T2: *Autoin* tallirenkejä harjaamaan hevosia (28)
- (7) ST: It is no wonder that he and his family have some of the more implacable spirits **upon their track**. (61)  
T1: Niin ollen ei ole ihme, että häntä ja hänen perillisiään *vainotaan* näin leppymättömästi. (125)

In both of these examples, the idiom is translated with only one verb. It may be argued, whether something is missing from these short, one-word translations, but it is also possible that the translators have compensated for this in some other parts of the text. On the other hand, it could be that sometimes the economic use of language wins over the colourfulness in Finnish.

## 5.5 Explication in Translation of Idioms

An opposite method to making the text shorter is to make it longer. I am not suggesting that the translators would consciously aim to make the text longer, but in explication, the purpose is to explain the meaning of the idiom in the ST to the Finnish readers, and this clarification inevitably makes the text longer. Explication was the third most popular strategy in my study with 34 instances (12%). In T1 this was the second most popular method with 17%, and in T2 it was the third most popular method with 8%.

In this next example, Dr Watson, who sometimes has trouble in following the quick thinking of Sherlock Holmes, expresses that he does not have enough information about the case that

they are attempting to solve. He expresses this with an idiom, whereas the Finnish translations explain it with a longer explanation:

- (8) ST: But I am **all in the dark**. (71)  
T1: Minulla *ei ole aavistustakaan siitä, mitä tämä kaikki oikeastaan tarkoittaa*. (136)  
T2: Mutta *enhän minä tiedä jutusta yhtään mitään*. (131)

One can even visually see that the Finnish translations are longer. Instead of trying to search for an equivalent for the English idiom, both of the translators have described the meaning of it, while at the same time rewording it as a plausible line for Dr Watson to say. Explicitation can be defended with the idea that it aids the reader to follow the storyline, when sometimes the way that English language uses idioms might be difficult to understand for Finnish readers.

On the other hand, the high amount of explicitation in T1 can also be the translator's personal style of translation. One translator can easily resort to one familiar technique, while another translator might be naturally drawn to another technique. Explicitation seems to be the preferred style of the first translator. The same translator also tends to describe something with two adjectives instead of one adjective, while translating an idiom.

- (9) ST: She is herself **the very soul of delicacy**. (9)  
T1: Hän on aivan *erikoisen herkkä ja hienotunteinen* nainen. (18)

In this example, two adjectives have been used to replace an idiom. This can be regarded as explicitation as well. The second adjective is reinforcing the first adjective to widen the view and to clarify the idiom. In the English sentence, the idiom does the reinforcing of the sentence.

## 5.6 Other Rhetorical Device in Translation of Idioms

Delabastita mentioned that other rhetorical devices in the text, while translating puns, can be alliteration, assonance, repetition, irony, paradox, rhyme, metaphor, or allusion (Ritala 2010, 23). In my data, the other rhetorical devices were almost entirely alliteration. Alliteration is generally very popular in the Finnish language, and both of the translations had plenty of alliteration as a rhetorical device – not only to replace idioms but throughout the stories. However, alliteration was not the only rhetorical device found in the texts: another device was the use of expletives. I will elaborate on this more in the examples. In total, instances where English idioms had been translated with a rhetoric device which do not form an idiom in Finnish, occurred 16 times in the study (6%). The two translators were fairly equal with this strategy with 7% in T1 and 5% in T2.

Even though alliteration is not as strong a rhetorical device as an idiom, it is a way for the translator to express that he or she has acknowledged the existence of an idiom in the ST and has done something to liven up the target language, albeit not finding an equivalent idiom. There are many ways of adding alliteration in the text: with two-word or three-word combinations, with two pairs of alliteration, or by separating the combination with an intervening word. Here are some examples from the texts:

- (10) ST: He had risen out of his drug-created dreams and was **hot upon the scent** of some new problem. (2)  
T1: Hän oli ravistautunut hereille huumausaineen luomista unelmista ja *käynyt kiihkeästi käsiksi* jonkin uuden ongelman selvittämiseen. (10)
- (11) ST: And now, Mr Wilson, **off you go at scratch** and tell us all about yourself. (27)  
T2: No niin, herra Wilson, jospa *lähtisitte liikkeelle alusta alkaen* ja kertoisitte meille kaiken itsestänne. (44)
- (12) ST: ... a man who might **play a deep game**. (39)  
T1: ... mies, joka *uskaltautui* empimättä *uhkapeliinkin*. (54)

In example (10), the alliteration consists of three words beginning with the same consonant which raises it more clearly from the surrounding text if it was just a two-word alliteration. The same has happened in example (11) with two pairs of alliteration which makes it more clearly a chosen method of translation than just a coincidence. In both examples (10) and (11) *käydä käsiksi* and *alusta alkaen* can also be classified as fixed expressions but their participation in a larger alliteration group places them in the rhetorical device category rather than in the fixed expressions. In example (12), the alliteration is divided with an intervening word but the use of the rather uncommon combination of two beginning u-vowels makes the words stand out and pair together in Finnish.

In T2, an idiom was replaced with an expletive in two cases which can also be regarded as a use of a rhetorical device. In both of these cases T1 had resorted to omission, so finding a suitable expression might not have been a simple task.

- (13) ST: Now I wonder, **who the deuce** that could have been. (20)  
T2: Kukahan *peijakas* se mahtoi olla? (37)
- (14) ST: How, **in the name of good-fortune**, did you know all that, Mr Holmes? (26)  
T1: *Luoja paratkoon*, herra Holmes, mistä ihmeestä te tiesitte tuon kaiken? (43)

The idiom in example (13), *who the deuce*, was a popular expression in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but has diminished in use both in British and American English in the 20<sup>th</sup> century according to Google Books Ngram Viewer (2024). The expression is a euphemism for the devil and rather old-fashioned now. The Finnish translation *peijakas* is also a mild euphemism for the devil, and

equally old-fashioned. The idiom in example (14) is even more rarely used in the present-day English and replacing it with a mild expletive in Finnish appears as a good choice.

## 5.7 Literal Translation and Omission

Literal translation and omission are two quite small categories in my data, but the noticeable feature is that they are crossing in popularity. While T1 favours omission with 8% and has only 1.5% of literal translation, T2 has 6% of literal translation and 2% of omission. In total, omission appears in 14 cases (5%), and literal translation appears in 10 cases (3.7%).

In literal translation the translator has translated the words almost literally though there might be small changes. The translated idiom does not form an idiom in Finnish, and the result is often somehow less invigorating than the original text. Literal translation is slightly difficult to see in separate examples because essentially there is nothing wrong with it, but in the surrounding of the rest of the story, it might stand out as a somewhat poor metaphor.

- (15) ST: I have them **in the hollow of my hand**. (65)  
T1: He ovat kaikki *käsissäni*. (128)

Literal translation approaches borrowing as in example (15), but even though the word *hand* is used in the translation metaphorically, it does not form an idiom even externally because it is only one word, and an idiom requires a group of at least two words. One could also argue that the example has an alliteration but even the alliteration is rather weak compared to the examples in the previous section.

If it is difficult to find a suitable translation for an idiom, translators might sometimes decide it is better to omit it entirely. It is possible in cases where the omission does not hinder the understanding of the sentence or the plot of the story. In some cases within Sherlock Holmes stories, the sentences are so long that the translators might have attempted to make them shorter by omitting an idiom. While reading a book, the reader usually does not notice the omission unless someone happens to read the ST and the translation at the same time. In the next example the omission is slightly more noticeable than in most of the cases.

- (16) ST: **In your heart of hearts**, do you think that Neville is alive? (79)  
T1: Uskotteko, että Neville on hengissä? (144)

In this example the intensifier *in your heart of hearts* has been omitted entirely. Other strategies could have been used here too, but often the translators are in a hurry, and they do not have

much time to search for alternatives. As the reader rarely notices the omission, it is actually surprising that the amount of omission was only 5% in the data.

## 5.8 Fixed Expression in Translation of Idioms

Surprisingly, translating an idiom with a fixed expression was more popular in the data than translation with a similar idiom or with other rhetorical devices. Fixed expression was used 18 times resulting in 6.6% of the cases. Both of the translators used it exactly nine times. It actually seems that some English idioms are often translated with a fixed expression in Finnish instead of an idiom.

- (17) ST: Well, we will take it as a working hypothesis **for want of a better**. (77)  
T1: Se on vain oletamus, mutta siihen saamme toistaiseksi tyytyä *paremman puutteessa*. (142)  
T2: No niin, *paremman puutteessa* pidämme sitä työhypoteesina. (136)

Fixed expressions also have the requirement of institutionalisation like idioms; they are “fixed” in a sense that they always appear in a same order and form. Some fixed expressions also have alliteration like the one in the example, *paremman puutteessa*. That might have helped them to become fixed expressions – they are easy to remember because of the alliteration. Other fixed expressions in the data with alliteration were, for example, *suoraan sanoen*, *loppujen lopuksi* and *syvällä sisimmässä*.

## 5.9 Creative Translation

The idea of creative translation is not to follow the ST as closely but more to create an adaptation of it in the target language. In this study creative translation can also mean adding something to the translation which is not there in the ST and is not forming an idiom. For creative translation, there are 26 instances in this study (9.5%). There was rather a big difference between the translators using the creative translation: in T1 it was used in 14% of cases, while in T2 it was used in 4% of cases.

Creative translation as a method is fairly similar to explicitation, but in creative translation the translator takes even more liberties to deviate from the ST.

- (18) ST: There’s plenty of thread, no doubt, but I can’t **get the end of it in my hand**. (72)  
T1: Johtolankoja on montakin, mutta *oikeata langanpäätä en vain löydä, mikä hänessä sitten lienee*. (137)

In this example, the end *mikä hänessä sitten lienee* has been added to the sentence. One can only guess the reasons for the addition, but it is possible that it is there to compensate for the

omission of the other idiom in the sentence, *no doubt*. In creative translation the voice of the translator becomes more visible than usual, and the addition is slightly more colloquial than the rest of the text. Also, in this next example, the translator deviates from ST:

- (19) ST: During all the years that he lived at Horsham, I doubt if he ever **set a foot in the town**.  
(50)  
T1: Hän ei seurustellut kenenkään kanssa, vaan eli omissa oloissaan maatilalla. (113)

In this example, one has to look at the whole sentence and not just the translation of the idiom. In fact, the whole sentence is transformed entirely but the basic idea stays the same of a hermit who did not like to mingle with other people. This kind of translation could be called adaptation because it follows only loosely the ST. However, this was only one sentence, and after this the translator returned to follow the ST word for word.

## 5.10 Additional Notes in Translation of Idioms

The additional notes, where extra information is added to the text in brackets, to the footnotes or in some cases to the prologue written by the translator, are especially common in translations of older literature classics like William Shakespeare's plays. In my study, there was only one case where T1 had made use of the footnotes in the translation and T2 had added this same extra information in the middle of the sentence. Overall this covered 0.7% of all the cases. The case was rather exceptional in the text as it was the only footnote that I observed during the entire four stories.

- (20) ST: It was twenty-five minutes to twelve, and of course it was clear enough **what was in the wind**. (32)  
T1: Kello oli kahtakymmentäviittä vailla kaksitoista, ja niin ollen oli aivan selvää, *mistä tässä oli kysymys*.<sup>1</sup> (24)

In this scene, a couple was rushing into a church and the description refers to the fact that it was only twenty-five minutes to twelve, which Conan Doyle regards as an adequate hint to the English reader of what was happening. On the other hand, the Finnish reader would not get the reference of the time being close to midday, and so the mention that it was clear what was in the wind, leaves the reader baffled. In T1 this problem was solved by adding a footnote at the end of the page, which explains that in England the wedding ceremony has to be performed before noon.

- (21) <sup>1</sup>Englannissa toimitetaan avioliittoon vihkiminen aina ennen kello kahtatoista. (T1, 24)

In T2, there is a similar addition but instead of a footnote, the explanation has been inserted as part of the text.

- (22) T2: Kello oli kahtakymmentäviittä vaille kaksitoista, **ja kun vihkimiset pitää toimittaa ennen puoltapäivää**, oli tietenkin aivan selvää, *mitä oli tekeillä*. (30)

T2 has omitted the mention that this is an English custom but relies on the reader's ability to deduct that, as the whole story is located in London. It is a coincidence that the additional notes happened in the same sentence where an idiom was used, and the additional notes were connected to the translation of the idiom, even though the idiom itself did not need any extra help in translation.

## 5.11 Compensation

Once in a while, translators add idioms to the translation even though there is not one in the ST. This is called compensation, and it is thought to balance out the overall number of idioms (or puns, jokes, irony, etc.) that had to be omitted from the ST. As the Finnish language might use idioms in different parts of the text to English language, it is wise to add idioms to parts where they occur naturally in the language.

Because compensation is a separate method of translating the idioms, they are not included in the 274 translations, and I could not count their share of percentages. In this section, I collected both idioms and fixed expressions in the translations and this resulted in 11 instances of compensation for both of the translators, and in 19 cases of the ST as three of the cases were the same for both of the translators. The idioms added to the Finnish translations are seamlessly embedded in the text rather than standing out as additions, as in the next example.

- (23) ST: ... that the deaths of my relations were really accidents, as the jury stated, and were not to be connected with the warnings. (55)  
T1: ... että setäni ja isäni kuolivat molemmat tapaturmaisesti, kuten aikanaan oli virallisesti todettu. Kirjeillä *ei ollut näissä onnettomuuksissa osaa eikä arpaa*, hän selitti. (119)

Here the warnings refer to the letters that the family had received, and the man assumes that the letters had nothing to do with the deaths. There is no idiom in the ST sentence, but the Finnish translation has used an idiom *ei osaa eikä arpaa* to create an emphasising effect.

## 5.12 Summary

To summarise, my data covered 274 cases of translations of idioms and 22 additional cases of compensation. In 33% of the cases, idioms had been translated with synonyms. In 14% of the cases a dissimilar idiom was utilised. Explication was used in 12% of the translations and creative translation in 9.5% of the cases. Fixed expressions reached 6.6%, while other rhetorical

devices covered 6% of the cases. Similar idioms were used in 5.5% of the cases, followed by omission with 5%. Borrowing covered 4.4% of the cases, while literal translation was used in 3.7% of the cases. In only 0.7% of the cases extra information was added to the translations.

## **6 Conclusion**

My goal for this study was to examine the different translation strategies that professional translators had utilised in the translation of idioms, and how they used their creativity in the translation. The results proved to be more varied than I expected. Altogether 12 categories were needed to cover most of the cases in the collected data. The different methods to translate idioms include much more than just finding a similar idiom or omitting the idiom. The entire omission of an idiom was surprisingly infrequent in this study: it covered only five percent of the cases. On the other hand, the results showed that replacing an idiom with a synonym proved to be the most popular method of translation. If one combines the groups of synonyms and explicitation together neither of which forms an idiom in the target language, they cover 45% of the cases in this study. It is possible that some would regard this as “omission of the idioms” albeit it is not a similar case. Synonyms and explicitation still carry the story forward and might sometimes make it easier for the reader to follow the plot.

Translating an English idiom with a Finnish idiom requires knowledge of the idioms in both languages from the translator. The translator is required to understand the literal and the figurative meaning of the idiom and the function it performs in the text to translate it with a suitable idiom. The distinction between similar and dissimilar idioms in the translation is not very important because each language has their own idioms and culturally coloured ways of expressing phenomenon around them. As long as the meaning of the idiom is similar and it fits the context, it fulfils the function of the idiom in the text. Similar and dissimilar idioms together covered 19% of the cases in this study. If we add fixed expressions to this figure, the cases covered 26% which is a little over a quarter of all the idioms.

Another interesting discovery in this study was the creative use of other methods in translation of idioms. Creative translation might bring the story closer to the target language reader because the translator often shares the same cultural background with the reader and might add elements which are familiar in their culture. Also, creative translation is sometimes needed when the ways of expression are just too different between two languages. Creative translation is somewhat an unknown territory, and it might be a little risky to deviate from the ST, but

sometimes the translator needs to go a little *off the beaten track*, as Conan Doyle would say, to be able to translate the idioms.

The use of other rhetorical devices in the data seemed to be connected with the Finnish language's love of alliteration, as most of the rhetorical devices used in this study were replacing the idiom with an alliteration. Then again, expletives were also used as rhetorical devices. Borrowing usually happened when the English idiom was descriptive and transparent and also made sense in Finnish though it had not received the status of an idiom. Literal translation is closely related to borrowing. Using additional notes was rare in translation of idioms in this study. Altogether creative translation, rhetorical device, borrowing, literal translation and additional notes covered 24 percent of the cases, so almost another quarter of this study.

Compensating the omitted idioms in other parts of the text could not be calculated with the same method as the other strategies, but it presents one possibility of adding the overall figure of idioms in the text. The advantage of compensation is that it allows the idioms to be added in parts of the text where they would naturally go in the target language. On the other hand, compensation deviates the translation slightly further away from the original text and therefore it is suitable to keep the balance with omitted and added idioms.

This study manifests that it definitely matters how translators translate idioms in English fiction. The large number of idioms in English language affects the nature of the text and a translator is required to have more than one solution in his or her tool bag. The more translation strategies of idioms the translator can master, the more vivid and naturally flowing language the target text will be. Often translators are working with tight schedules which do not allow plenty of time for research work during translation, but if a translator has familiarised themselves with the different translation strategies beforehand, it is possible to use varied methods of translation with their cumulative knowledge of idioms.

In my personal opinion, idioms could have been used even more in both of the translations in this research. In some of the cases where the translators had not used a Finnish idiom, it could have been discovered with a little effort. Translators may have personal preferences for how they like to translate idioms and the kind of translation strategies they prefer. Without going any deeper into the preferences of the two translators that I was observing, the study showcased the vast variety of the strategies they were using. The addition of categories to Delabastita's and Baker's translation strategies was very useful.

In fact, the problem was that even with the additional categories, all of the cases found in the study could not be specified with these categories. Some refinements would still be required to be done to the categories. In the scope of this research, I had to omit the cultural substitution in translation, even though it could have been discussed in one or two of the cases. Varieties of vivid language keep making exceptions that need an even wider range of categories.

Another problem that I discovered in this research is that some of the categories I used are so near to each other that they are partly overlapping, and that the objective division becomes difficult, which unavoidably results to some subjective choices with the categorisation. The kind of partly overlapping categories were, for example, borrowing and literal translation, explicitation and creative translation, and synonyms and explicitation. Also the line between idioms and fixed expressions is not always clear and alliteration often appears together with fixed expressions. Placing an idiom in one category even though it has features of another category too, are choices where another researcher could have arrived at different results. Maybe the categorisation of language in every situation is impossible because of the flexible and changing nature of language and the fuzzy areas around the categories. Nevertheless, it is not to say that research of language or translation is useless. Little by little the understanding of the language increases with research.

It is likely that I overlooked or did not notice some of the idioms in the ST, so 137 does not represent the ultimate number of idioms that are present in the four short stories. Nevertheless, the data is large enough that it presents a comprehensive share of the percentages of the different translation strategies used in the translations.

In this thesis, I limited the research material to the four short stories of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Stories. However, the stories still present a narrow section of language and of all the idioms available. In the future, it would be interesting to use other literary sources in translation of the idioms. Other sources could comprise a wider selection of Conan Doyle's stories, or maybe a comparative study with another author and different translators. The question also remains, could the translation categories be further divided into more accurate categories. In addition, it would be interesting to compare translations between literary source and audio-visual source, as many of the Sherlock Holmes stories exist as TV-series or movie adaptations.

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