

# ASSESSING THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS IN SELECTED SPORT ADVERTISEMENTS

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## Abstract

One of the most common types of figurative language that can have an effect on language users is metaphor. Currently, such figurative linguistic expressions are extensively utilized in advertisements. Nevertheless, the translation of these figurative expressions from one language to another poses some challenges and problems. Hence, the translation of selected metaphoric expressions sport advertisements from English as a source language (SL) into Arabic as a target language (TL) is investigated. In the current study, it is hypothesized that translators make use of the communicative translation method in rendering metaphors more frequently than the semantic method. Moreover, it is also hypothesized that variances in the cultural systems between the SL and TL can hinder the translation processes. To confirm hypotheses of the study, the data is collected from three sport advertisements. To test the difficulties of translation, each of the selected metaphoric advertisements is translated by three translators. These translations are evaluated according to the model of Newmark (1988).

***Keywords:* metaphor, communicative translation, semantic translation, metaphor interpretation, assessment, advertisement.**

## تقييم ترجمة العبارات المجازية الإنجليزية في إعلانات رياضية مختارة

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### الملخص:

تعد الاستعارة أحد أكثر أنواع اللغة التصويرية شيوعاً والتي يمكن أن يكون لها تأثير على مستخدمي اللغة. حالياً، تستخدم هذه التعبيرات اللغوية التصويرية على نطاق واسع في الإعلانات. ومع ذلك، فإن ترجمة هذه التعبيرات التصويرية من لغة إلى أخرى تطرح بعض التحديات والمشكلات. لذلك، فإن الدراسة الحالية تبحث في ترجمة التعبيرات المجازية للإعلانات رياضية مختارة من اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة مصدر (SL) إلى العربية كلغة مستهدفة (TL). يُفترض أن المترجمين يستخدمون طريقة الترجمة التواصلية في تقديم الاستعارات بشكل متكرر أكثر من الطريقة الدلالية. علاوة على ذلك، من المفترض أيضاً أن الاختلافات في الأنظمة الثقافية بين اللغة المصدر واللغة الهدف يمكن أن تعوق عمليات الترجمة. لتأكيد فرضيات الدراسة تم جمع البيانات من ثلاث إعلانات رياضية. لاختبار صعوبات الترجمة، تتم ترجمة كل إعلان من الإعلانات المجازية المختارة بواسطة ثلاثة مترجمين. يتم تقييم هذه الترجمات وفقاً لنموذج Newmark (1988).

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستعارة، الترجمة التواصلية، الترجمة الدلالية، تفسير الاستعارة، التقييم،

الإعلان.



## Introduction

### 1. Introduction

It is obvious that translation has a long history. It is “as old as language itself” Megrab (1997, p. 1). Regardless of the fact that different definitions of translation have been provided by many scholars, it is clear that there is a consensus that translation is the procedure of linking what is intended to be conveyed by using codes from one language to another. Catford (1965, p. 1) describes the process of translation as “substituting a text in one language for a text in another or the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent material in another”. Similarly, Newmark (1988, p. 5) considers the process of translation as interpreting “the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text”. Furthermore, Jiang (2008, p. 862) clarifies that rendering meaning is not only to find “word-for-word, sentence-for-sentence” equivalence, but also to reproduce the mental representations of the SL by using the linguistic expressions of the TL. Sokolovsky (2010, p. 286) states that “translation is a creative intellectual activity, denoting the transmitting of information from a source language into a target language”. The above-mentioned characterizations of translation reveal that it is simply a process of rendering meaning from one language into another by using the codes of the two languages. It is also necessary for translators to have enough knowledge of these codes.

Macadam (1975, p. 748) states that the word metaphor can historically be traced back to the Greek word *metaphora* which has the meaning of carrying or transferring something. Thus, it can be claimed that metaphor communicates or carries meaning from the producer to the receiver. It is defined by Newmark (1988, p.104) as "any figurative expression: The transferred sense of a physical word; the personification ... and abstraction; the application of a word or collocation to what it does not literally denote". In addition, Lakoff and Johnson (2003, p. 4) explain that it is “a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish—a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language”. Besides, metaphor can be described in terms of conventionality. It usually arises whenever “a unit of discourse is used to refer unconventionally to an object, process or concept, or colligates in an unconventional way” (Goatly, 1997, p. 8). It is worth noting that metaphor is mostly used by people intentionally either to achieve a cognitive purpose that is so entitled as “referential purpose” or to fulfill an

aesthetic purpose which is called “pragmatic purpose” (Newmark, 1991, p. 43). Nevertheless, Broeck (1981, p. 77) puts it in a more general way that “metaphor may differ in function from text to text, language to language and from culture to culture”.

Despite the consensus on the metaphor definition, the meanings conveyed by the metaphoric expressions are usually varied and subject to cultural and sociological differences. Therefore, the translation of figurative language is in fact difficult. One metaphorical expression can have multiple meanings depending on a variety of factors. In addition to the cultural and sociological factors, there are other contextual factors such as the context in which the metaphor is used. All these factors need to be considered by translators before rendering any figurative expression.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2. 1. The Types of Metaphor**

After defining the concept of metaphor, it is important for the current study to overview the main types of it. Different types of metaphor have been identified. Linguists try to provide a general classification to metaphors in English. Conceptual metaphors in general are classified into two main features: the feature of frequency and the other one is the underlying structures. Lakoff and Johnson (2003, p. 152) elucidate that those conceptual metaphors can be categorized according to the frequency feature into two kinds: the conventional metaphors and the new metaphors. In the first place, the conventional metaphors are the ones “that structure the ordinary conceptual system of our culture, which is reflected in our everyday language” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 139). In the second place, the novel or new metaphors are not part of the cultural conventions of a language. This type of metaphor is essentially unlike the conventional metaphor because it goes behind the identified social conditions. Usually, the new metaphor is categorized by its power of generating new truth rather than the conceptualization of preexisting one as it happens with the conventional metaphors.

Newmark (1988, p.106) classifies metaphors into six types. These types are essentially the ones that are most commonly used in English. The dead



metaphors, and because of the overuse, they have lost their won metaphoric image. Explicitly, individuals are able to clearly differentiate between the object and its image. Because of the fact that dead metaphors are used by individuals for quite long period of time, they are usually used unconsciously as if they were common or everyday language.

Accordingly, it is hypothetical that decipherers face no glitches or problems rendering such type of metaphors since they have lost their novelty and could be deciphered literally. It is suggested that “in the case of dead metaphors translators simply have to look for an equivalent metaphor in the TL” (Viny & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 210). Newmark (1988, p. 106) explains that dead metaphors are “metaphors where one is hardly conscious of the image, frequently relate to universal terms of space and time”. They are likewise termed historical metaphors or frozen metaphors. Similarly, Cliché metaphors are the ones that have “perhaps temporality outlived their usefulness, that are used as a substitute for clear thought, often emotively, but without corresponding to the facts of the matter” (Newmark, 1988, p. 106). They have the same characteristics of the dead metaphors. These metaphors have also lost their originality and figurativeness of language. Newmark (1988, p. 87) clarifies that Cliché metaphors are composed of two categories of stereotyped juxtapositions. They are actually simplex and complex metaphors.

Moreover, Newmark (1988, p. 108) identifies stock or standard metaphor as “an established metaphor which in an informal context is an efficient and concise method of conversing a physical and/or mental situation both referentially and pragmatically”. This sort of metaphor is actually not “deadened by overuse”, for instance, “a ray of hope” and “his life hangs on a thread”. Another type of metaphor is the adapted metaphor. It is in fact the type of metaphor that is adapted into a completely a new situation by its speakers or writers. This group of metaphors also includes the use of proverbs. For instance, “Jack is as good as his master” can be adapted into Arabic to be translated as “الناس سواسية”. Consequently, Newmark (1988, p. 111) elucidates that “an adapted stock metaphor should, where possible, be translated by an equivalent adapted metaphor”.

The next type of metaphors defined by Newmark (1988, p. 111) is the recent metaphors which are described as “a metaphorical neologism, often

'anonymously' coined, which has spread rapidly in the SL". This essentially shows the recently made words and expressions that are used to indicate objects that previously have names. For instance, the word "pissed" which means "drunk"; "spastic" which has the meaning of "stupid" and "skint" which means "without money". Such kind of metaphors are also characterized as being live metaphor. Finally, the original metaphors are "created or quoted by the SL writer- In principle, in authoritative and expressive texts, these should be translated literally, whether they are universal, cultural or obscurely subjective". Original metaphors need to be literally translated as they present attitudes of writers and reflect their viewpoint and personality. It is remarked that "the translator wants to emphasize the sense or the image. The choice of procedures in expressive or authoritative texts is much narrower, as is usual in semantic translation" (Newmark, 1988, p. 213).

### **3. Methodology**

It is obvious that different methods are used in translating metaphors from one the SL to the TL. The most commonly used translation methods in this respect are the communicative and semantic translation methods. Therefore, in the current study, the model of Newmark (1988) is adopted in analyzing the collected data. In this approach, two methods of translation are proposed. They are the Communicative Translation (CT) and the Semantic Translation (ST). Differences between these two approaches have been obviously identified.

Mostly, "communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original" whereas "semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original". Besides, the "communicative translation addresses itself solely to the second reader, who does not anticipate difficulties or obscurities, and would expect a generous transfer of foreign elements into his own culture as well as his language where necessary" while semantic translation method "remains within the original culture and assists the reader only in its connotations if they constitute the essential human (non-ethic) message of the text". Basically, the difference between communicative and semantic methods of translation is that the degree of



effectiveness of former and the informativeness of the latter (Newmark, 1988, pp. 38-39).

In addition, within the communicative method of translation, the translation is mostly to be “smoother, simpler, clearer, more direct, more conventional, conforming to a particular register of language, tending to undertranslate”. In contrast, the translation semantic method “tends to be more complex, more awkward, more detailed, more concentrated, and pursues the thought-processes rather than the intention of the transmitter”. It has the tendency to “overtranslate, to be more specific than the original, to include more meanings in its search for one nuance of meaning”. In the case of communicative method, the cultural norms of the SL should be transferred to the cultural norms of the TL. By contrast, semantic method of translation requires interpreters to replicate the original discourse from the SL to the TL as precise as possible. Most commonly, semantic translation is constantly characterized as being “inferior to its original” because it comprises the “loss of meaning” whereas communicative translation is characterized as being better since it increases the force as well as the clarity (Newmark, 1991, pp. 10-13).

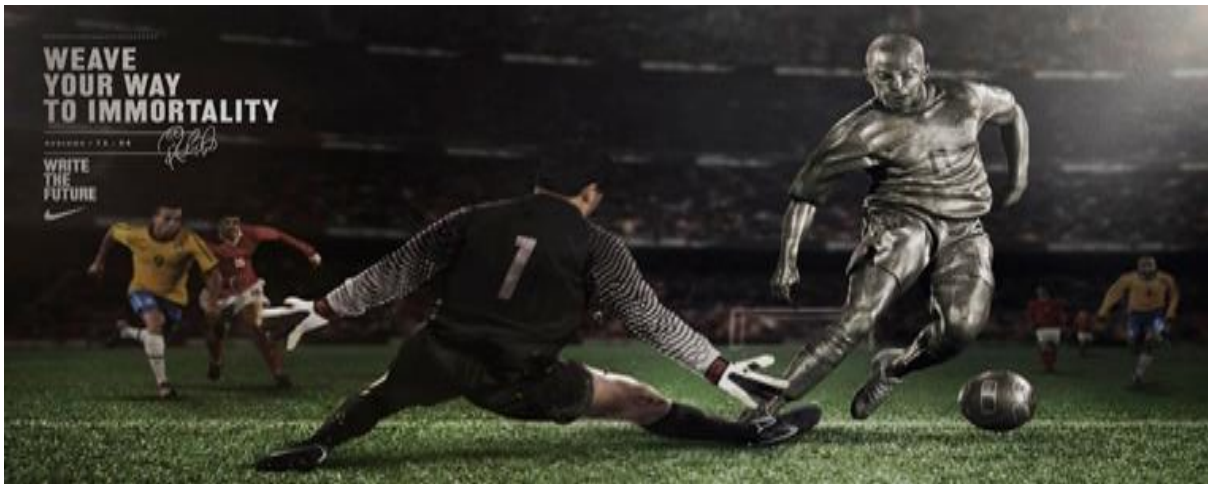
### **3. 1. Data collection and Analysis**

The data of the study are collected qualitatively and quantitatively. Four sport advertisements are selected, and each one of these advertisements is translated by three translators. The collected data are analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively by using Newmark’s model (1988). In analyzing the collected data, firstly, the category of the metaphor in the SL is identified, and then, the meaning of that metaphor is explained to evaluate whether the translators transfer the intended meaning into the TL or not. Each one of the three translations is evaluated discretely.

## **4. Results and discussions**

This section is devoted to the analysis of the selected data as follows:

#### 4. 1. Advertisement No. 1



The selected English metaphor “weave your way to immortality” can be identified as being Cliché metaphor since because it may have outlived its effectiveness that is used as a substitute for clear thought. This ensures that the figurative power of such metaphoric expressions is diminished by its overemployment.

In interpreting the metaphor “weave your way to immortality”, it is obvious it indicates the ambition of the footballers to immortalize themselves by the football matches. Additionally, people can simply remember those players of football after the end of the match or even after their retirement. Interpreting the metaphor in this way would guide the assessment of translation, and whether the translators convey the intended meaning of the metaphors or not. The above-mentioned metaphor that is used in the sport advertisement is rendered into the subsequent translations:

In the first place, the above metaphoric expression is translated into “شئ طريقك” نحو الخلود” where the interpreter makes use the communicative method of translation. This interpretation is essentially reader-centered because the interpreter attempts to convey the intended purpose of using the metaphor. Though the verb “weave” in the English metaphoric expression actually has the sense of “انسج”, nevertheless; it is rendered into “شئ” due to the Arabic collocation is frequently identified as “شئ طريقك”, but not “انسج طريقك”. Therefore, the metaphor is interpreted in this manner to be more operative, easy to read, more usual, simpler, smoother, more direct, clearer, more orthodox. Additionally, this makes it easy to readers to clutch the intended meaning of the metaphoric expression.

In the same way, the second interpretation of the selected metaphoric expression which is “اصنع طريقك للخلود”, the interpreter uses the communicative technique of translating metaphors. The verb “weave” is interpreted into “اصنع” that is completely dissimilar to the literal interpretation of “weave” that is “انسج”. Furthermore, the preposition “to” in the English metaphoric expression is substituted by “لل” in the Arabic translation. This echoes the reality that the interpreter remunerated more consideration to the transfer of effect and message in the method of translation. Consequently, the syntactical or the formal structure is not traced. This translation is in fact biased to the target language. Thus, it can be concluded that the communicative translation method used in translating this metaphor is devoted to gain force as well as clarity in Arabic.

In the third translation of the metaphor “ارسم طريقك نحو المجد”, the translator uses the communicative translation method where the translation is in fact oriented to the reader and biased to the target language. Some of the expressions are completely changed into unrelated ones in the target language through translation. The verb “weave” is rendered into “ارسم” which is not revealed in the SL. Therefore, the translator uses the verb “ارسم” to transfer a similar effect of the metaphoric expression from the original text to the target one. Besides, the expression “immortality” is rendered into “المجد” that is totally different from the literal translation of that expression in the SL. The interpreter attempts to translate the SL expressions to be as closely related to the TL as possible. In cultural terms, individuals frequently say “ثشق طريقك” or “ارسم طريقك” or “اصنع طريقك” in Arabic. Therefore, translators of the Arabic culture translate that the metaphor according to the communicative method of translation to convey the intended message of the metaphor in the SL.

#### 4. 2. Advertisement No. 2



In this advertisement, the metaphor of the SL “tackle fate” is actually a dead metaphor since it is utilized by individuals for an extended period of time, consequently; its image is lost because of the overusing. It is unconsciously used by people as if it is an ordinary or common speech. Thus, it is possible that translators have no problems or difficulties in translating such categories of metaphors because they missed their exclusivity and they are comprehensible if translated literally and accurately. In the process of interpreting this metaphor, its meaning implied in the notion that the players of football can plan the events of their personal future by football playing. It is bright and solid for the reason that they take the responsibility of creating that admirable future throughout the playing of football.

In the first translation “اصنع القدر”, the interpreter uses the communicative translation method to render the metaphor “tackle fate”. The image in the SL, that is “fate” is replaced by an analogous one in the TL, that is “القدر”. The translator actually uses this method for the reason that the metaphor does have a parallel image and meaning from SL to TL. Put it another way, it happens owing to the universality of metaphoric expression of the SL, therefore; they can be perceived or comprehended by the readers of the TL as the readers of the SL do. Accordingly, it can be distinguished that rendering the verb “tackle” in the SL into “اصنع” in the TL would be natural, simpler, clearer, operative and easy to read. In cultural terms, it is usual in the Arabic language to say “يصنع قدره” to convey the intended meaning rather than “يعالج قدره”.

In contrast, in the second translation, the semantic translation method is used by the translator to literally render the metaphoric expression. In this metaphor, the verb “tackle” as well as the image “fate” are accurately and literally interpreted respectively into “عالج” and “المصير”. In fact, this translation is inferior to the SL metaphor as a result of losing the intended message the advertiser needs to communicate by using that metaphor. It not collocationally acceptable in Arabic to use “عالج المصير” since it would abnormal for the readers of the TL to get distinct meaning of such expression. Consequently, this translation would be problematic to be comprehended because it is in cultural terms unreachable to the readers of the TL.

Correspondingly, in the third translation “زاوغ القدر”, the interpreter makes use of the semantic translation method. Despite the fact that the metaphoric

image, that is, “fate” is figuratively interpreted, apparently, the rendering of this metaphoric expression appears to be vague for the reason that the verb “tackle” is rendered literally in a manner that does not communicate the intended message of the metaphor. Essentially, translating the verb “tackle” into “راوغ” appears to be odd because it is not collocationally probable in Arabic language to say “راوغ القدر”. In literal translation this metaphor, the usage of some of the expressions such as “راوغ” do not denote the same implied message of the metaphor in the SL.

### 4.3. Advertisement No. 3



The type of metaphor in this in the advertisement “bet till the last second” is actually dead metaphor since it is overused by people for a long time thus it has lost its image. It can be used by individuals unconsciously. Consequently, it is hypothesized that translators have no difficulties and problems in interpreting such type of metaphors for the reason that they lost their uniqueness and come to be rendered accurately. Nevertheless, the type of the translation method will not affect conveying the intended meaning successfully, nonetheless, the use of the communicative method will make the meaning to be more effective than the semantic translation method.

The metaphor “bet till the last second” in the above advertisement has the sense that players of football should not despair to win the match up until the end. To put it another way, the players must not lose the confidence in scoring the goals until the last minute of the playing time. This metaphoric expression is rendered into the following three translations:

In the first interpretation “تشبَّث بالأمل حتى الرمق الاخير”، the communicative translation method is used by the translator. Surely, in rendering this metaphoric expression, the SL image, “the last second”, is replaced with the standard image in Arabic, that is “الرمق الاخير” for the reason that the metaphoric image in the SL does not culturally clash with the one of the TL. It is compatible culturally in TL. Consequently, the word “second” that exactly means “ثانية” or “لحظة” is rendered into “الرمق” to yield the interpretation to be more natural, though; it conveys the same intended meaning for both TL and SL readers. Furthermore, the word “bet” in the SL metaphoric expression is completely not translated, though it has the meaning of “يراهن” in the TL. As an alternative, some words are added to the translation such as “تشبث” and “بالأمل” that has no equivalence the metaphor of the SL. It is possible that they are translated as being correspondent to the expression “bet”. The phrase “تشبث بالأمل” is added to make the translation accessible and easily understood by the TL readers. Thus, this interpretation is reader-directed, it is biased toward the TL and effectively transmitting the intended message.

The second translation “لا تفقد الأمل بالفوز، وحاول حتى الرمق الاخير” reflects the use of the communicative translation method where the image of the metaphor “the last second” in the SL is substituted by a typical image in the TL, that is, “الرمق الاخير” for the reason that this interpretation is not culturally clashing with the image of the metaphor in the SL. To make it easy to the TL readers to get the purpose of the advertisement, the phrase “لا تفقد الأمل بالفوز” is added by the translator, though it has no equivalence in the SL. Furthermore, the word “bet” is rendered into “حاول” that literally must be rendered into “راهن”. Consequently, this translation is really effect-directed, more natural, simpler, smoother, more direct, clearer, and more conservative. The translator attempts to recover the style as well as to elucidate the uncertainties in the SL.

The third interpretation “استمر بالمنافسة حتى البرهة الاخيرة” is translated according to the communicative translation method. In the same way, the translator substitutes the metaphorical image “the last second” in the SL by a comparable one in the TL, that is, “البرهة الاخيرة”. Through this image, the proposed message is represented prudently. Additionally, the verb “استمر” is added to the TL. Nevertheless, it has no correspondent in the metaphor of the SL. The verb “bet” is rendered as if it is a noun “المنافسة” to result in translation that is



more natural, simpler, clearer, more direct, smoother, more conventional and easier to read.

To demonstrate which translation method is utilized by the interpreters in each of the three translations for the selected sport advertisements that contain metaphorical expressions, the following table includes the number of the nominated advertisement, the number of translation and the adopted translation method. If the communicative translation method (CT) is utilized, then, it is marked with (√) if it is not, then, it is marked with (×). The same is true for the (ST), as it is shown in the following:

Ad No.	Translation No.	CT	ST
Ad 1.	T1	√	×
	T2	√	×
	T3	√	×
Ad 2.	T1	√	×
	T2	×	√
	T3	×	√
Ad 3.	T1	√	×
	T2	√	×
	T3	√	×

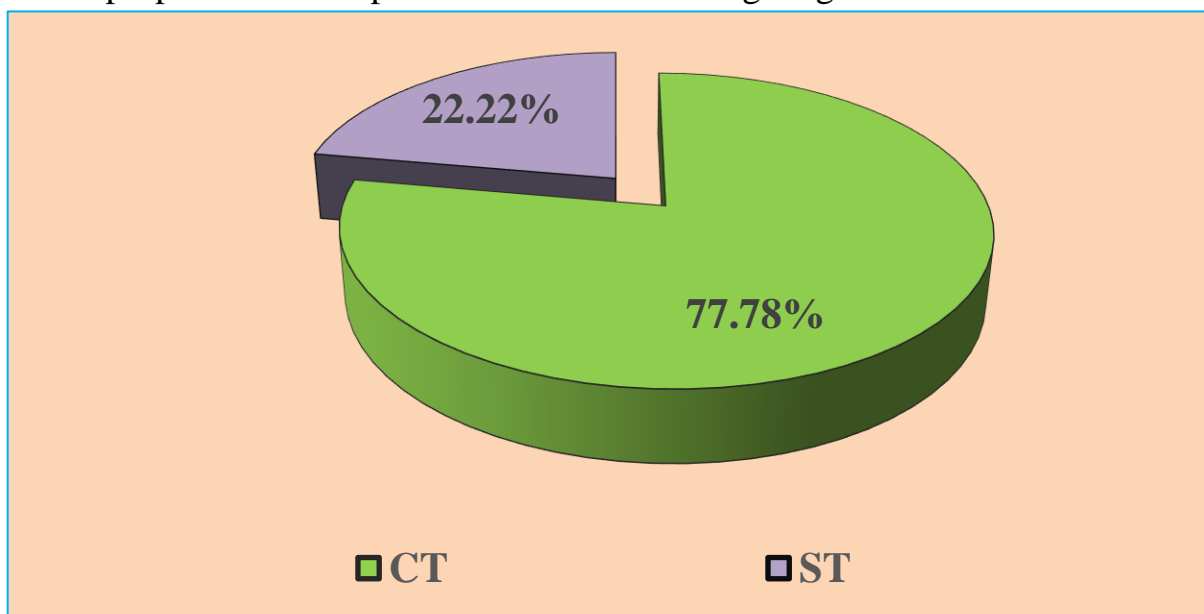
**Table (1): The CT and the ST methods of translation**

In table (2), the frequencies and the percentages of the communicative and the semantic translation methods are presented to recognize which one of these two methods is the most regularly used in translating the metaphoric expressions:

Translation method	The frequency	The percentage
CT	7	77.78 %
ST	2	22.22 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table (2): The frequency and the percentage of CT and ST methods**

Table (2) displays that the total number of translations for three selected metaphorical expressions in the advertisements is (9). The communicative method of translation (CT) is used in (7) translations that stand for (77.78 %) of the total proportion. However, the semantic method of translation is used only within (2) translations, and this represents (22.22 %) of the overall percentage. These proportions are represented in the following diagram:



**Figure (1): The percentages of CT and ST**

### **Conclusions**

The analysis of the nominated data discloses that in rendering the advertisements that involve metaphorical expressions from English to Arabic, the



process of translation poses many problems for the reason that some of the expressions in these posters need to be interpreted communicatively with the intention of making the translation more understandable to the Arabic speaking readers.

Owing to the cultural variances between Arabic and English, translators encounter many difficulties in interpreting the metaphorical expressions from SL to the TL. Consequently, the translators ought to adopt appropriate terms from the TL to enable the readers to comprehend these metaphorical expressions consistent with the culture of the TL. In translating the nominated metaphorical terms, the interpreters more regularly use the communicative method of translation than the semantic method of translation. Whereas the communicative method translation is used in (7) translations, and this represents (77.78%) of the overall percentage, the semantic method of translation is used only in (2) translations, and this represents (22.22%) of the whole percentage.

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