

TRANSLATING IDIOMS:
A case study on Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*
and its Finnish translation

Master's thesis
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tutkielman tarkoituksena on tutkia idiomien käännösstrategioita. Tutkimuskohteena on Donna Tarttin romaani <i>The Secret History</i> ja sen suomenkielinen käännös <i>Jumalat juhlivat öisin</i>. Tutkimus pyrkii selvittämään, millaisia strategioita idiomien kääntämiseen voidaan käyttää ja mitä idiomeille tapahtuu, kun ne käännetään kielestä toiseen. Lisäksi tutkimus tarkastelee tapauksia, joissa epäidiomaattinen englanninkielinen ilmaus on käännetty suomenkielisellä idiomilla. Tutkimus on luonteeltaan kvalitatiivinen, joskin kvantitatiivisia metodeja käytetään käännösstrategioiden jakautumista tarkastellessa. Tutkimuksessa käytetään induktiivisia ja deskriptiivisiä analyysitapoja, sillä sen tarkoituksena on kuvailla idiomien kääntämistä mahdollisimman laajasti ja monipuolisesti.</p> <p>Aineisto sisältää yhteensä 625 englanninkielistä idiomiä ja niiden suomenkieliset käännösvastineet. Idiomit poimittiin alkuperäisteoksesta ja sen suomenkielisestä käännöksestä annetun idiomimääritelmän perusteella. Idiomit jaoteltiin niiden käännösstrategian mukaan kategorioihin, ja niitä tarkasteltiin mm. rakenteen ja niissä käytettävien kielikuvien valossa. Syitä eri strategioiden käyttämiseen pohdittiin ja strategioiden onnistumista analysoitiin. Lisäksi tutkimuksesta esiin noussevia seikkoja peilattiin teoreettisiin suosituksiin, joita idiomien kääntämiseen yleensä annetaan.</p> <p>Tutkielman tulokset osoittivat, että idiomien kääntämiseen käytetään pääasiassa kolmea eri strategiaa. Useimmiten idiomit käännettiin epäidiomaattisella ilmauksella. Toiseksi suosituin strategia oli idiomien kääntäminen idiomilla. Kolmas ja vähiten käytetty strategia oli sananmukainen kääntäminen. Lisäksi kääntäjä oli satunnaisesti kääntänyt alkuperäisiä epäidiomaattisia ilmauksia suomen kielen idiomeilla. Tällä strategialla kompensoitiin sitä, ettei kaikkia idiomeita voitu kääntää idiomeina suomenkieliseen tekstiin. Tutkimuksen perusteella voidaan sanoa, että idiomit eivät ole erityinen käännösongelma, mutta ilmausten idiomaattisuuden säilyttäminen sitä vastoin on välillä hankalaa.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

Translation has become an activity of enormous importance in recent decades. We live in an increasingly internationalized world where ever-growing numbers of individuals are in continuous contact with foreign cultures and languages both in their professional lives as well as in more informal contexts, usually via mass media. The more internationalized the world becomes, the greater the importance of translation and qualified translators also grows. Translation allows us to overcome cultural and linguistic boundaries and enables communication between different cultures. Translation is, thus, an extremely topical issue in today's multicultural and multilingual world.

Since translation has become increasingly important on both national and global level, it is definitely a subject worth a closer study. Obviously, there is a wide range of topics which could be investigated in terms of translational aspects. The present study focuses on the translation of one of the most fascinating and innovative aspects of language: idioms. The purpose of this study is to investigate the translation strategies of idioms on the basis of a prose fiction novel. More specifically, the study concentrates on Donna Tartt's novel *The Secret History* and its Finnish translation *Jumalat juhliivat öisin*. The aim is to collect the English idioms from the original, English-language novel and compare them to their Finnish translations, which are gathered from the Finnish translation of the book. Thus, the purpose of this research is to examine what kind of strategies the translator has used in translating English idioms into Finnish. Furthermore, I will also examine cases where English non-idiomatic expressions have been translated with Finnish idioms. This study will shed some light on the translatability of English idioms into Finnish and what happens to these idioms in the translation process.

This study will also compare theoretical views on translation to the actual reality. In other words, I will examine how the theoretical recommendations for translating idioms correlate with practical reality, with special reference to Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* and its Finnish translation. A common view in translation theory is that idioms should always be translated with corresponding target language idioms

whenever possible. This study will give some idea of how often this can actually be done in practice. Another common recommendation in translation theory is that idioms should never be translated literally. Literal translation is perceived as the worst possible translation technique, since it results in foreign elements in the target language text. My intention is, on the basis of this novel, to also examine whether the literal translation strategy is, in fact, such a poor translation strategy.

This study combines not only two personal interests of mine, but also two topics which can be said to play a rather massive role in each and everyone's personal lives. The importance of translation is, first of all, manifested in our everyday lives in various ways, some of which we might be aware of and some of which are more implicit. The ever-increasing amount of information in areas such as medicine and other sciences has resulted in the fact that this new information must be shared across all linguistic boundaries. With the help of cross-language translation this immensely important information also becomes available to us. Furthermore, the importance of translation can also be seen in more informal, casual contexts. Translational activity is present in our everyday lives as we watch foreign television series and movies with subtitles, read translated books and different sorts of manuals and guidebooks - to mention only a few of the various domains in which translation plays a significant role. The importance of translational activity is therefore particularly evident in the domains of science and entertainment, for instance.

Idioms, on the other hand, are an important and natural part of all languages as well as a prominent part of our everyday discourse. Idioms are such a normal part of our language use that we hardly even notice how vastly we use them in our everyday speech and writing. Since there is so much idiomaticity in all languages, these language-fixed expressions are most certainly worth studying in their own right. Moreover, idiomatic expressions have been explored very little in comparison with various other areas of linguistics. This is, in my view, a great shame, seeing how heavily idiomatic for instance the English language is - thus providing quite a fruitful area of study.

The fact that idioms are always language- and culture-specific material makes also the *translation* of idioms an important and interesting area of study. Since each language has its own ways of expressing certain things, corresponding expressions may not be found in another language. This language-fixity makes the translation of idioms sometimes rather tricky, and idioms are indeed considered as one of the most complicated elements of language in terms of their translatability - hence I feel it is important to take a closer look at their possible translation strategies.

Translation strategies of idioms are not actually an entirely unexplored topic, since similar studies have been carried out earlier. English idioms and their translation into Finnish have been studied previously for instance by Keränen (2006) and Kostamo (1995). However, the idiomatic expressions of this particular book have not been studied previously. Moreover, the above-mentioned studies have not examined cases where a non-idiomatic source language expression has been translated with a target language idiom. Since this is quite an effective strategy to compensate for all the idioms which have been 'lost' in the translation process, I feel it is important to finally carry out a study where this strategy is included in the analysis as well. By translating some source language non-idioms with target language idioms the translator can maintain the style of the original text. In my view this is an important strategy in compensating for all the 'lost' idioms as well as preserving the linguistic and stylistic spirit of the original text.

Some studies have already been carried out on Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*. Earlier studies on this book have mainly concentrated on other aspects, such as the themes of the book; for example Leppänen (2005) has examined the moral and ethical conceptions in the book. However, as far as I know, the actual language use of the book has not been studied earlier. The book contains extremely colourful language and plenty of idioms, metaphors and other figurative expressions, which makes it an ideal piece of literature for investigating English idiomatic expressions as well as their Finnish translations. Since the language in the book is so rich and figurative, I feel it is a shame that the vocabulary of the book has been left completely untouched in earlier scholarly studies.

The present study deals with two major theoretical themes which will be looked at in the theoretical part of the study: *translation* and *idioms*. In the theoretical considerations of translation I will describe the nature of contemporary translation and its ideals, as well as introduce some central concepts in translation theory which bear relevance to this research. The concept of translation strategy and the translation of prose texts will also be explored. In the theoretical considerations of idioms, on the other hand, I will present different definitions of idioms and discuss how scholars have described and categorized idioms. Last but not least, I will take a closer look at what scholars have said about the translation of idioms. These theoretical recommendations will serve as a framework for my own study on the translation of idioms.

In the empirical part of this study I will classify the applied translation strategies and analyze the findings in greater detail. This study uses inductive and descriptive methods of analysis, which is why the empirical part focuses on characterizing the collected data in terms of the syntactic structure and the figurative imagery of the idioms, for instance. In addition to describing the data, I will also ponder reasons for using particular strategies and evaluate the successfulness of these strategies. Furthermore, the findings of this study are discussed in relation to the theoretical recommendations introduced in the theoretical part of this study.

To sum up, this study seeks an answer to the question of what kinds of translation strategies can be used in the translation of idioms and what happens to source language idioms when they are translated to another language. In addition, it examines the compensative strategy in which source language non-idioms are shifted to target language idioms. Since this study is qualitative and inductive by its very nature, more specific research questions were not formulated. Instead, the aim is to describe the translation of idioms as carefully and diversely as possible and make some general conclusions on the basis of the empirical findings.

This research can contribute to the field of translation by providing suggestions about how to treat language-specific elements (in this case idioms) in translation. This study may help professional translators discover new, creative means for translating

problematic language-specific expressions as well as to encourage them to be innovative and creative.

Throughout the study, I will use two abbreviations which need to be clarified at this point. From now on, the abbreviation SL stands for 'source language' (i.e. the language of the original text) and the abbreviation TL refers to 'target language' (i.e. the language into which the original material is translated).

2 TRANSLATION

With more than 5000 languages spoken in the world today, the need for translation and educated translators is evident – some might say even crucial. This need is reinforced by the increasing mobility of people and ever growing internationality; never before have we been as much in contact with other cultures and languages as we are today. As Lörscher (1991: 1) puts it, the ever-increasing exchange of information in areas such as economy, politics and science, makes communication between different languages and cultures absolutely vital. As the world is becoming more internationalized each day, also language skills are emphasized more than ever. This phenomenon has resulted in the fact that the importance of translation has also grown greater than ever before. Translation enables communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries and reinforces intercultural understanding.

According to Newmark (1981: 3), the very first signs of translation can be traced back to as far as 3000 BC. A popular view is that translation is almost as old as language itself; where there has been language, there has always been also translation. Despite the fact that translation has become increasingly important in recent decades, translation still continues to be somewhat undervalued. The common misconception seems to be that anyone who masters another language in addition to their native one is also capable of producing smooth translations between these languages quite easily and without any considerable effort. As Bassnett and Lefevere (1998: 2) put it, people often assume that texts only need to be transferred mechanically into another language with the help of dictionaries. And since everyone can look up words from a dictionary, translators' work is often not much valued or appreciated. However, we only need to take a look at some views on the goals of translation to understand that the process of translation is not as simple and straightforward a matter as one might assume.

The purpose of this section is to shed some light on the nature of contemporary translation. First, some common definitions of translation as well as different views on the goals and aims of translation are introduced. Next I will move on to introduce some central concepts in translation theory. An overview of the development and

current nature of translation theory will be given and the concepts of meaning, equivalence, and the theory of skopos will be clarified. After that I will move on to discuss translation strategies, and finally, the art of translating prose fiction is explored.

2.1 Definitions and nature of translation

Translation is usually defined as a process of substituting a source language text by a target language text, where the aim is to preserve the meaning and content of the original text as accurately as possible. This is obviously an immensely simplified definition of a process which might seem relatively simple on the outside, but is actually a much more complicated process in reality. I will now introduce how translation theorists have defined translation and characterized the nature and aims of translation.

Catford (1974: 20) defines translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)". He describes translation as a uni-directional process, which is always performed from a given source language to a given target language. In Catford's (ibid.: 21) view, the aim of translation is to find the target language *equivalents* (the concept of equivalence will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.2.2).

According to Bell (1991: xv), the goal of translation is "the transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining, as far as possible, the content of the message and the formal features and functional roles of the original text." In contrast to Catford, Bell (ibid.: 6) argues that a total equivalence between a source language text and its translation is something that can never be fully achieved.

Newmark (1981: 7) defines translation as "a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language". According to Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 2), the aim of

translation is that the meaning of the target language text is similar to that of the source language text, and that "the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible, but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted". In other words, the source language structure must not be imitated to such an extent that the target language text becomes ungrammatical or sounds otherwise unnatural or clumsy.

These definitions of translation are fairly congruent with each other, and various theorists define translation in relatively similar terms. Although a diversity of perspectives has been articulated within the field of translation theory, there are some views that translation theorists generally agree on. There are three prevailing features which seem to characterize the essence of contemporary translation, its aims and goals. One view is that free translation should be adopted as opposed to literal, word-for-word translation. The second widely accepted view is that the meaning and content of the message should be prioritized over the form of the message. The third view that most translation theorists recognize is that translation always involves some kind of loss of meaning. I will now take a closer look at these statements.

Throughout the history of translation theory there has been constant debate about how faithful the translation must be to the original text and how much freedom the translators actually have in their work. Earlier the emphasis was on translating texts as literally as possible, by carefully substituting each source language word by a target language word which has 'the same meaning'. Nowadays the purpose of translation is no longer to merely match words of one language by those of another, but the stress is now rather laid on the function of the text (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998: 3). Free translation is, thus, nowadays preferred to literal translation. Free translation aims at conveying the informational content of the message and preserving the style of the original, but it also takes equal notice of the target language's exigencies (Vehmas-Lehto 2002: 26).

Nowadays it is also commonly accepted in translation theory that in order to preserve the meaning of the message, the form must almost always be altered to some extent. For instance Nida and Taber (1969: 105) state that when a message in one language is

transferred to another language, it is the content which takes priority over the form, and must therefore be retained at all costs. In other words, the meaning must be preserved at the expense of the form. Translation should therefore always aim at conveying the meaning of the original message as carefully as possible, even if it means transformations in the form or changes in the syntactic structure. Of course ideally, the original sentence structure should be preserved, but due to differences between two languages, this is often simply not possible.

A third commonly acknowledged view is that all translation processes involve some kind of 'loss' of meaning. Bell (1991: 6) argues that since such a thing as an absolute synonymy between words of two languages does not exist, something is almost always 'lost' in the translation process. Also Newmark (1981: 7) stresses that each translation assignment is bound to involve a loss of meaning to some extent, and translations may therefore only be approximate. These losses may be due to various different factors, for instance if the text describes phenomena that are unique to the environment and culture of the source language area (*ibid.*). The second, practically unavoidable reason for loss is the fact that "two languages, both in their basic character (*langue*) and their social varieties (*parole*) in context have different lexical, grammatical and sound systems." (*ibid.*: 7-8). Wills (1982: 41-42) states that the fact that translations may only ever be approximate is a logical consequence of the fact that there are significant linguistic and socio-cultural differences between different languages and cultures.

After now having discussed today's translation ideal on a fairly general level, it is time to move on to consider some more specific theoretical concepts which are popular in contemporary translation theory. These theoretical considerations are useful in order to better understand the aims and goals of today's translation ideal.

2.2 Theoretical approaches to translation

Even though translation has been practiced for thousands of years already, translation theory is a relatively young discipline. Translation theory started developing only in the 1950s (Ingo 1990: 11). Before the 1950s very little had actually been written about translation, although the number of translations had increased immensely in a relatively short period of time. As the world was becoming increasingly internationalized, also the need for translation grew greater than ever before (Vehmas-Lehto 2002: 32). Translation theory is still a developing discipline in its infancy, which is why, according to Wills (1982: 52), it has not yet developed a precisely defined theory or methodology.

Newmark (1981: 19) defines translation theory as "the body of knowledge that we have and have still to have about the process of translating". According to Wills (1982: 13), translation theory examines the transferability of texts from one language to another language, as well as the "similarity of the effect produced by the source language text (SLT) and that produced by the target language text (TLT)". However, Wills also voices criticism towards translation theory. In his (*ibid.*: 14) view, it is highly questionable whether some theoretical recommendations or hypotheses about translation will be of any use in solving the concrete problems that translators face in their work.

According to Newmark (1981: 4), with an ever-increasing number of both translators and translations, the general atmosphere among scholars in the 1950s was that some sort of translation theory should be formulated as a frame of reference. Newmark (*ibid.*: 5) points out that the main reason for the need to establish some kind of translation theory was the fact that the quality of the translations of the time was rather poor. It had also become increasingly important to standardize the terminology of translation. Translation theory was therefore created in order to provide a framework of principles and guidelines for translating texts in general, as well as to propose translation methods for different text types (*ibid.*: 19). In principal, the formulation of translation theory was expected to assist translators in their work by

providing universal rules and principles about translation, and consequently, to improve the quality of translations.

In order to discuss issues related to translation any further, definitions of a few theoretical concepts are in order at this point. I will now take a closer look at some of the key concepts in translation theory. Obviously, translation theory is full of different kinds of theoretical concepts, but in this context I will only introduce concepts which bear relevance to this research; the concepts of meaning and equivalence and the theory of skopos. In order to better understand and discuss the translation of idioms, I will first have to define these theoretical concepts.

2.2.1 The concept of meaning

The concept of meaning is quite essential in translation theory – after all, the whole process of translation is from start to finish concerned with meaning. It is generally agreed among scholars that meaning is of crucial importance in translation: translations are said to have 'the same meaning' as the original texts. But what kind of meaning do we exactly refer to by this? According to Newmark (1977, as quoted by Chesterman 1989: 134), "meaning is complicated, many-levelled, a network of relations". Larson (1984: 36) states that translation aims at transferring the meaning of a text in one language to another language - but before the translator may do so, s/he must know that there are various different types of meanings. The concept of 'meaning' cannot therefore in translation theory refer to one specific type of meaning, but rather, there are several *different* types of meanings. I will now look at the concept of meaning as interpreted and classified by some translation theorists.

According to Bell (1991: 83), already the meanings of words themselves are rather problematic, since a straightforward, one-to-one correspondence between the words of two different languages does not exist. In Bell's (ibid.: 91) view the crucial problem in translation evolves from the fact that "the relationships of similarity and difference between concepts (and the words that express them) do not always necessarily coincide in the languages involved in the translation". Another problem is the fact that words also have connotative meanings, i.e. meaning which is

associational as well as highly subjective and is not always shared by the whole speech community (ibid.: 99). The connotations that words or phrases have, thus, vary from person to person, and this is why in translation it can be difficult to convey the appropriate connotative meaning to the target language audience.

Nida and Taber (1969) distinguish three different types of meaning which should be considered in the process of translating; *grammatical*, *referential* and *connotative* meaning. According to Nida and Taber (ibid.: 34), grammar is usually understood as a mere set of arbitrary rules about how words are put together. However, since the same grammatical construction can be used to express various different relationships, it inevitably can have a number of different meanings (ibid: 35). Hence, grammar does carry some meaning, too. Referential meaning, on the other hand, is indicated by words which refer to objects, events and relations (ibid.: 56). Finally, the connotative meaning refers to people's emotional reactions to items of a language, since each word also carries a set of associations (ibid.: 91).

Vehmas-Lehto (2002: 74), on the other hand, proposes four different types of meaning which bear relevance to translation: denotative, connotative, pragmatic and intralinguistic meaning. *Denotative* meaning refers to the meaning outside the language, and *connotative* meaning is the associative meaning of the word. Connotations are usually emotionally charged (positively or negatively) and they awaken reactions (ibid.). Vehmas-Lehto (ibid.: 75) points out that the translator must know both the denotative and the connotative meaning of the words, because sometimes two words which are equivalent in their denotative meaning, can have very different connotations in two different languages.

Pragmatic meaning, on the other hand, refers to the relationship between linguistic signs and language users (Vehmas-Lehto 2002: 75). The relationship between the expression and the participants varies according to various factors, such as differences in the participants' age, social status, education and so forth. Finally, Vehmas-Lehto (ibid.: 76) differentiates *intralinguistic* meaning, i.e. the meaning which refers to the relations between the units of the language. This meaning can be expressed by different grammatical elements, such as case suffixes, prepositions, tense and word

order. In translation the intralinguistic meaning is usually not transferred to the target text, since imitating the source language structures can make the translation unintelligible to the target language reader (ibid.: 77).

Peter Newmark's (1981) conceptualisation of meaning is perhaps the most complicated one, since he suggests a number of different types of meanings. According to him (ibid.: 23), translators must decide which variety of meaning they take into consideration in each translation assignment. In Newmark's (ibid.) opinion, these varieties are the linguistic, the referential, the subjective, the 'force' or 'intention' of the utterance, the performative, the inferential, the cultural, the code meaning, the connotative, the pragmatic and the semiotic meaning. According to Newmark (ibid.: 24), it is important that the translator always knows the referential and the linguistic meanings. Referential ambiguity can be clarified by considering the whole of the text or consulting the encyclopaedia, whereas the performative, intentional, inferential and connotational meanings are often more or less ambiguous - hence the translator has to carefully consider the context in which the expression appears (ibid.: 25).

It is probably safe to conclude that the term 'meaning' has various interpretations within the field of translation theory, and translation theorists have suggested a number of different types of meanings that should be taken into account in the process of translation. Translators must not only know the semantic meaning of the source language words, but also consider such aspects as the connotative, cultural or grammatical meaning, for instance. These aspects must also be considered in the choice of target language words.

The variety of different types of meanings introduced in this section clearly indicates that meaning is quite a complex issue in translation. However, in the translation of idioms there is one more meaning type that must be taken into consideration: the *figurative* meaning. According to Nida and Taber (1969: 87), each term has a certain primary, literary meaning, but some terms may also have additional, figurative meanings. These additional meanings can be very different from the primary meaning of the expression. Such meanings are called figurative, and idioms are prime examples of this kind of phrases. Nida and Taber (ibid.: 88) point out that figurative

meanings are almost always culture- and language-specific, because these figurative extensions are often entirely arbitrary. The translator must therefore look beyond the primary meaning and be able to recognize the figurative meaning of the phrase. Since it is not possible to understand the meaning of these expressions by adding up the meanings of the individual words, understanding the figurative meaning is absolutely crucial.

2.2.2 The concept of equivalence

One of the most central concepts in translation theory is the concept of *equivalence*. A considerable amount of literature has been devoted to it, and, consequently, some confusion and vagueness exists in the very definition of the concept. A number of contradictory statements have been made about translation equivalence and its applicability, and translation theorists have attempted to define equivalence from various points of views. Different kinds of categories of equivalence have also been suggested within the field of translation theory. The complexity and elusiveness of the concept has resulted in the fact that a universally valid, comprehensive definition of equivalence does not exist. Nevertheless, I will now introduce some views on translation equivalence and its different classifications.

The definition of equivalence has experienced great changes in the history of translation theory. According to Bassnett and Lefevere (1998: 2), in the early days of translation theory it was believed that there could actually be something like a universally applicable equivalence. However, today the common view is that translators themselves have the power to decide on the specific degree of equivalence that they choose to strive for in each translation assignment (*ibid.*). Equivalence is no longer understood as the mechanical matching of words - instead, nowadays translators are "free to opt for the kind of faithfulness that will ensure, in their opinion, that a given text is received by the target audience in optimal conditions." (*ibid.*: 3)

Eugene A. Nida's (1969) conceptualisation of *dynamic equivalence* is perhaps the best known view on translation equivalence. According to Nida and Taber (1969: 24), dynamic equivalence has been achieved if the target language readers respond to the same text in the same way that the source language readers responded to it. In other words, the translation should always have the same emotional effect on target language readers as the source text had on source language readers. This effect can hardly ever be perfectly identical, however, due to different cultural settings of the SL and TL audiences (ibid.). Another problem is that sometimes it might be somewhat difficult to determine what exactly the 'effect' of a given text is and who precisely is the intended receiver of the message (Chesterman 1989: 80).

J.C. Catford's *textual equivalence* is another well-known definition of translation equivalence. According to Catford (1974: 49), source and target language words do not usually have precisely the same meaning in the linguistic sense, but that does not mean that they could not nevertheless function well enough in the same situation. Thus, Catford (ibid.) argues that the translation is equivalent with the source text when they are "interchangeable in a given situation".

Some translation theorists have attempted to clarify the concept of equivalence by suggesting that one type of equivalence which could be applicable to all translations is a sheer impossibility – rather, there could be different types of equivalence. For instance according to Chesterman (1989: 99), there are several different types of equivalence, of which some should be used for certain text types, while others are more suitable for other text types. In each translation exercise the translator must therefore decide on the appropriate kind of equivalence that the text in question demands. Koller (1979, in Chesterman 1989: 100) suggests that equivalence has been achieved if the target text succeeds to preserve certain requirements, for example the content, style or function of the original text. Koller (ibid.) therefore proposes five different types of equivalence: denotative, connotative, text-normative, pragmatic and formal equivalence. Furthermore, Hartmann and Stork (1972, as quoted by Bell 1991: 6) also reject the view that there could be only one type of equivalence. Instead, they suggest that equivalence is rather a matter of degrees, and texts can be equivalent in different terms (e.g. equivalent in regard of the content or semantics, for instance).

It can therefore be concluded that translation theorists have tried to define and describe the concept of equivalence in fairly different terms and from various viewpoints. As stated earlier, much of the debate within the field of translation theory has been devoted to the degree of faithfulness that translations should aim for. In Koskinen's (2003: 375) view, discussion on the concept of equivalence can be considered to continue the never-ending debate over how faithful translations should be to the original texts. With the help of the concept of equivalence, translation theorists have attempted to define the relation of 'sameness' between the original text and its translation (ibid.). After all, as Koskinen (ibid.: 374) states, the traditional view has been that the more faithfully the translation succeeds to repeat the content and style of the original message, the more successful it is.

However, the linguistic and cultural differences between two different languages make perfect correspondence a sheer impossibility in practice. As Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 29) puts it, equivalence in translation should no longer be understood as a relationship of sameness, since "sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between SL and TL version". Wills (1982: 136) concludes his discussion on translation equivalence by stating that translation theory has not been able to agree on the way translation equivalence should be measured, which is why clear-cut criteria for it cannot be offered. Hence, at present, translation theory cannot really make unified statements about how equivalence should be achieved in translation.

2.2.3 Theory of skopos

The final theoretical concept which I think needs to be clarified in the context of investigating the translation of idioms, is the theory of skopos. *Skopos* refers to the aim and purpose of the translated text. Theory of skopos is worth considering at this point, because its main focus and interest is in the target language and culture instead of the source language and culture. The skopos theory is therefore interested in how the translated text works in the target language community. Since idioms should always be translated with the target audience's interest at heart and with expressions

which function in the target language, the skopos theory is definitely noteworthy in this context.

As it became evident in the previous section, opinions and views on translation equivalence differ greatly among scholars. The skopos theory reacts to the problem of equivalence by questioning the entire need for translation equivalence in the first place. Some theorists have suggested that there is no reason why translations should aim for a certain type of equivalence (Vehmas-Lehto 2002: 91). The skopos theory is not interested in the equivalence between the source and target language texts, but its main concern is how the translation works in the target language community. According to the skopos theory, the translation does not necessarily have to aim for equivalence, but rather, most important thing is that the translation is good (ibid.: 92).

According to Chesterman (1989: 173), the term 'skopos' refers to the aim or purpose of the translation, which may be very different from that of the source text. In the skopos theory, translation is seen as a form of action which has its own aims as opposed to the aims of the original text, and the *skopos* is a term used to express the aim or purpose of the translation.

According to Chesterman (1989: 174), the client who commissions the translational task determines the aim of the translation and its mode of realization. The translator is then responsible for the performance of the translational task and adjusting the skopos for the target audience's needs (ibid.). The skopos of the target language text is therefore determined by the target audience's requirements, as defined by the translator.

The crucial issue pointed out by the skopos theory is that the source text is almost always composed so that it functions in the source language culture and conditions. The source text is therefore always oriented towards the source language culture – whereas the translation must be oriented towards the target culture, "and it is this which ultimately defines its adequacy" (Chesterman 1989: 175). The target text should thereafter function appropriately in the target culture. This is the reason why the source and target language texts may be very different from each other, although

sometimes the translation and the source text may of course share the same function, *skopos* (ibid.).

According to Chesterman (1989: 174), among the most important outcomes of the *skopos* theory is the new, higher status of the target text and the translator. In the *skopos* theory the superiority of the original author is questioned and the role of the translator is emphasized instead. Ultimately it is the translator who decides how important the source text is in the given translational action - the decisive factor is "the purpose, the *skopos*, of the communication in a given situation." (ibid.). The attention is therefore shifted from the original author to the translator, thus appreciating the translator's work and stressing his/her role.

The theory of *skopos* is useful for this research, because in the translation of idioms it is precisely the target readers whose interests the translated expressions should first and foremost serve. Since source language idioms function rarely in another language as such, they should be translated so that they become intelligible and meaningful to the target language reader. The *skopos* theory emphasizes the role of the target language audience and the translator, as opposed to the source language audience and the original author. This orientation towards the target language culture is something that one should bear in mind especially when translating language-specific expressions such as idioms.

2.3 Translation strategies

Since the purpose of this study is to examine the translation strategies of idioms, a few words about the concept of translation strategy are definitely in order. Very little has been actually written about translation strategies within the field of translation theory, since some scholars consider it a useless concept in the first place. Lörcher (1991: 70) points out that the concept of translation strategy is hardly used at all in theoretical considerations of translation - on the rare occasions it does get mentioned, it is usually not defined adequately or distinguished from other similar concepts. Some argue that the notion of translation strategy has little value in solving the

concrete problems of translation. Others, such as Leppihalme (1997: 24), argue that familiarity with translation strategies and their application must be in central place in a competent translator's work.

In short, translation strategies are problem-solving tools which the translator may use when a translation problem occurs. Lörcher (1991: 76) defines translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language to another". In Leppihalme's (1997: 24) view translation strategies are applied when a translation difficulty occurs and the translator wishes to solve the problem and produce a good translation. Thus, according to Leppihalme (*ibid.*: 28), translation strategies are "means which the translator, within the confines of his/her existing knowledge, considers to be the best in order to reach the goals set by the translation task."

According to Lefevere (1992: 97), translators first scan through the whole text and develop a strategy for translating the text as a whole, on the basis of which they then come up with tactical solutions for more specific problems. In Lefevere's (*ibid.*: 86-87) view typical translation problems emerge from issues related to language use, discourse, poetics and ideology, and the translator must develop appropriate, routine strategies to deal with these reoccurring problems that s/he is likely to encounter also in the long run.

Leppihalme (1997: 25) points out that translators often use translation strategies more or less unconsciously: the use of strategies is usually so automatized that few translators actually consciously deliberate the problem-solving process. When a translation problem occurs, then, the translator considers – consciously or unconsciously – different ways of solving the problem in question. According to Leppihalme (*ibid.*), the translator may "either consider strategies in abstract terms or try out different possible solutions for the problems at hand". S/he then chooses a strategy that s/he considers to be the most appropriate for the situation, after which s/he evaluates if the choice has been successful and the resulting translation works well enough (*ibid.*). The choice can therefore be made either through a conscious decision-making process, or completely intuitively.

Some have criticized the notion of translation strategy for being prescriptive, "a form of giving instructions to the translator" (Leppihalme 1997: 26). Leppihalme (*ibid.*: 28), however, argues that in some cases the use of the concept of strategies helps to identify a number of potential ways to solve particular problems. Awareness of different possible strategies may help translators learn something that can also be applied to other kinds of translation problems. Leppihalme (*ibid.*) therefore states that by comparing the applied translation strategies to the quality of the resulting translation, it is possible to discover strategies that are likely to work in other, similar situations as well.

Whether or not a translator, then, makes any deliberate use of translation strategies, it may be good to be aware of the various sorts of existing strategies. As Lefevere (1992: 108) points out, consideration of translation strategies can show individual translators how other translators have dealt with different kinds of translation problems. The wide range of translation strategies can therefore help the translator find the best and the most effective way to act when a certain translation problem re-occurs. Furthermore, Leppihalme (1997: 78) stresses that considering a number of strategies is "more likely to lead to successful translations than routine use of one strategy only".

Bassnett and Lefevere (1998: 4) point out that also different text types need different kinds of translation strategies: the main purpose of some texts is to convey information, while others aim at entertaining or persuading, for instance. Different text types need to be translated in a different way and therefore require different translation strategies. For instance Katharina Reiss (1976, as cited in Vehmas-Lehto 2002: 72) has distinguished different text types on the basis of the function of the texts, thus suggesting three different text types: informative, expressive and operative texts, which all require their own translation strategies. Prose fiction, which the research object of this study represents, belongs to the expressive text type. Next, I will take a closer look at what has been said about the translation of the expressive text type: prose texts.

2.4 Translating prose fiction

Although a considerable amount of theoretical literature has been devoted to the translation of poetry, very little has been said about translating prose fiction. According to Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 109), the problems of translating literary prose have received far less attention than those of translating poetry. This is most likely due to the alleged higher status of poetry; a novel is usually regarded as something easier to translate because it is simpler in structure (*ibid.*). Hence, very few statements of the methodology of translating prose texts have been made within the field of translation theory.

Even though the translation of prose fiction is generally considered as something 'easier' than the translation of poetry, for instance, it is not a simple matter at all. In fact, translating a prose fiction text demands a variety of skills and capabilities from the translator. According to Landers (2001: 7), the translator must not only master the source language thoroughly, but also have a perfect command over the target language. Secondly, a translator of literary prose must master a wide range of topics and have an extensive general knowledge (Oittinen 2003: 180). More specifically, the translator must have profound knowledge about both the source and target language cultures. Furthermore, Oittinen (*ibid.*) states that the translator must also be familiar with different literary styles and master them, too. Obviously, qualities such as creativity and innovativeness are also demanded.

Translation of a prose fiction text starts from carefully reading the source language text. According to Landers (2001: 45) a thorough reading of the source language text and familiarity with it is of crucial importance. It is absolutely essential that the translator has a comprehensive overall picture as well as an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the source text before s/he can start translating it. The translator should first have a profound comprehension of the text as a whole, after which s/he may move on to analyze individual elements of the text (Oittinen 2003: 172). A thorough grounding in the source language text also ensures that the translator gets an idea of the tone and style of the original text (Landers 2001: 68).

Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 115) emphasizes that the translator of a prose fiction novel should not treat individual sentences in isolation, or s/he might damage the integrity of the piece as a whole. Individual sentences form part of the total structure, and this is the reason why they should not be translated in isolation, but rather as part of the overall structure and composition of the text. As Lefevere (1992: 17) puts it, translators do not translate just individual expressions or sentences – rather, they deal with larger chunks of text. These chunks should not be translated as something separable from the rest of the text, either. Instead, the translator should treat the prose text as an integral and structured unit, while carefully paying attention also to the stylistic, grammatical and idiomatic features of the target language (Bassnett-McGuire 1980: 117).

The process of literary text translation involves a variety of problems which the translator must solve. As Landers (2001: 91) states, "a book-length translation is made up of literally thousands of decisions, some as tiny as the choice between a comma and a semicolon, others as momentous as whether to render proper names into the TL or leave them in the SL." According to Oittinen (2003: 180), one of the biggest problems is how to combine form and content cohesively and coherently – after all, novels are usually substantially long, which demands ability to bind different parts of the text together so that the overall outcome is cohesive and integral. One must also be extremely careful with the manner of expression in order to produce literary prose also in the target language (ibid.).

Literary translation also has its own conventions and norms, which the translator must be aware of (Oittinen 2003: 168). According to Oittinen (ibid.: 169), a translator of prose fiction chooses the *aesthetic* translation strategy, in which the form (expression) and contentual issues are equally important. Wills (1982: 76) expresses the same idea by stating that the translator must creatively reshape the text on both the "level of content" and the "level of expression". In prose texts the linguistic form has two equally important functions: a text-cohesive function and an aesthetic function (Wills ibid.: 77).

It is also essential that a literary translator is able to convey the tone and style of the original text. According to Landers (2001: 90), prose translators should have no style of their own at all, but "disappear into and become indistinguishable from the style of the SL author". In other words, the translator's own personal style should not show through, but instead the translator should adapt to the style of the original author. Landers (*ibid.*: 27) also stresses that all aspects of the translated text should reproduce the same emotional effect in the target language audience as was produced in the original source language audience.

Furthermore, the principles of free translation are obviously something that should be followed in the translation of novels. Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 117) sums up the essence of literary translation rather well by stating that although the translator has certain responsibilities in regards of the original text, s/he also has the right to alter the target language text, as much as is needed in order to "provide the target language reader with a text that conforms to the target language stylistic and idiomatic norms". According to Bassnett-McGuire (*ibid.*: 28) a translator of a literary text should not aim for establishing equivalence between the original text and the translation, but is, instead, mainly concerned with artistic procedures.

In conclusion, it is quite impossible to provide an exhaustive answer to the question of what the translation of prose fiction is or should be like. All translation exercises take place in different situations and under different circumstances, in different places at different times. As Oittinen (2003: 179) points out, all texts appear in a different manner to different people, and much depends on the translator's viewpoint, their translation strategy, the audience and so forth. Therefore, there simply is no clear-cut answer to the question of how translators should translate prose fiction and what they should aim for in the translation.

3 IDIOMS

After now having discussed some key concepts in translation theory and examining the translation of prose fiction, it is time to take a closer look at the other major theoretical theme of this study: idioms. Idioms are generally defined as language-specific expressions which usually carry a non-literal meaning that can be very different from the literal meaning of the expression. Idiomatic expressions are common in all languages and they are used widely in all sorts of communication; in written as well as in spoken interaction, in formal and informal contexts. Idioms are colourful and lively expressions which are usually unique and specific to a particular language. The fact that there is so much idiomaticity in all languages, makes them not only an important part of our everyday language use, but also an interesting area of study.

Despite the fact that idiomatic expressions are a prominent part of our everyday discourse, they still continue to be somewhat neglected in language studies. Makkai (1972: 23) states that the study of idiomaticity has been left widely untouched in scholarly studies, which makes it one of the most under-explored areas of the language. This is rather peculiar insofar as idioms are hardly marginal in a language such as English, for instance. In addition, Makkai (*ibid.*) points out that the concept of 'idiom' has been in use as long as since antiquity. It is, thus, rather puzzling that idioms have been so widely ignored in scholarly studies for so long. According to Weinreich (1969: 24), "even works explicitly devoted to semantics have skipped over the topic of idioms almost entirely".

Why are idioms important and worth studying, then? In addition to the fact that idioms are an extremely common part of the normal everyday language use, but still a largely neglected area in scholarly studies, idioms are also a fascinating and innovative part of the language. As Fernando (1996: 25) puts it, idioms not only ensure that our communication is coherent and cohesive, but they also produce discourse "that is socially acceptable as well as precise, lively and interesting". Furthermore, it is commonly agreed that a native-like command of a language demands familiarity with idiomatic expressions and the ability to use them fluently

and appropriately. As a non-native speaker of English and a student of languages, I find English language idioms immensely captivating and intriguing.

Even though the main theoretical focus of this study is on translation and its different aspects, idioms are also worth noting in this context, as I will need a precise definition of an idiom before I can carry out my research. First I will describe how idioms have been defined, after which I will move on to describe the nature and characteristics of idioms more precisely. Next, some common classifications on the types of idioms are introduced. My own definition of an idiom will be provided later on in section 5.3.

3.1. Definitions of an idiom

The term 'idiom' is generally used in a variety of different senses. According to Cacciari (1993: 27), this is due to the fact that idioms are somewhat difficult to define. Hence, there is some disagreement over what kind of expressions should be counted as idioms. The purpose of this section is to introduce some common definitions of idioms, both by dictionaries and scholars. Since scholars have not managed to reach an agreement on the absolutely essential characteristics of idioms, in this chapter I will only introduce idioms in their most basic definements - in other words, I will try to keep things as simple as possible at this point. Because of the complexity of the term, I will first introduce how an idiom is defined in its simplest sense, after which I may move on to discuss the more specific properties of idioms in greater detail.

The Oxford English dictionary (1989: 624) provides five different senses for the term idiom, of which sense 3a is the most quoted one: "a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc., peculiar to a language; a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of a language, and often having a signification other than its grammatical or logical one." The *OED* definition is worth considering in this context, seeing as Fernando (1996: 16) argues that the influence of the *OED* definition can be seen in the vast majority of idiom definitions provided by scholars. According to Fernando (1996: 95), the popularity of the *OED* definition is due to the

fact that it captures an extensive range of different kinds of expressions, thus providing a useful framework for categorizing idiomaticity.

The Longman dictionary of the English language (1991: 784) seems to be somewhat influenced by the *OED* definition, as it offers the following three senses for the term idiom: "the language peculiar to a people or to a district, community, or class; a dialect", "syntactic, grammatical, or structural form peculiar to a language", and "an expression in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either grammatically or especially in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the sum of the meanings of its elements." *The Cambridge international dictionary of English* (1995: 701), on the other hand, provides a more simplified definition of an idiom, stating that an idiom is a "group of words in a fixed order having a particular meaning, different from the meanings of each word understood on its own."

A number of scholars also seem to accept the *OED* definition of an idiom in one form or another. Makkai (1972: 122) reserves the term 'idiom' for multiword expressions whose meaning is not predictable from their component parts. A definition offered by Fraser (1970, as quoted by Fernando 1996: 8) is fairly similar, as he defines an idiom as a "constituent or a series of constituents for which the semantic interpretation is not a compositional function of the formatives of which it is composed." The fact that the meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced from the meanings of its individual components, is therefore in central place in both Makkai's and Fraser's definitions of an idiom.

Fernando's (1996: 38) definition of an idiom, on the other hand, is three-fold. Firstly, she defines idioms as conventionalized multiword expressions. Secondly, she states that idioms are almost always non-literal. Thirdly, she determines that idioms are "indivisible units whose components cannot be varied or varied only within definable limits" (ibid.: 30). Conventionality, non-literalness and fixity/unvariability are therefore the cornerstones of Fernando's definition of an idiom. Weinreich (1969: 42), on the other hand, pays attention to subsenses that idioms carry, as he defines an idiom as a "phraseological unit that involves at least two polysemous constituents, and in which there is a reciprocal contextual selection of subsenses."

Strässler's (1982) definition of an idiom differs from various other definitions in respect of its exclusion of expressions which consist of 'a verb plus an adverbial particle or preposition'. According to Strässler (1982: 79), an idiom is "a concatenation of more than one lexeme whose meaning is not derived from the meanings of its constituents and which does not consist of a verb plus adverbial particle or preposition." Strässler bases his decision not to include phrasal verbs as idioms on the fact that the second parts of these phrases are semantically empty.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the definitions introduced here are from the simplest end of the scale. The definitions provided thus far are fairly unified with each other, and no major contradictions seem to exist. However, things get more complicated when we take a look at the more precise characteristics that idioms possess. These multifaceted features of idioms will be the subject of the following section.

3.2 Characteristics of idioms

The purpose of this section is to introduce what have been defined as the essential and exquisite characteristics of idioms. The previous section dealt with relatively simple definitions of an idiom, and this section continues the discussion by explicating the unique features of idioms in greater detail. There may be some overlapping in the present and the previous chapter, but I do feel it is important to describe the specific characteristics of idioms more precisely, seeing as in the previous section idioms were described only on a highly general level. This section will give some idea of how scholars have typically characterized idioms in an attempt to capture their fundamental nature.

As concluded in the previous section, the basic definition of an idiom provided by dictionaries is relatively straightforward. However, while scholars may agree on some characteristics of idioms, there is great disagreement over the scope of idiomaticity, for instance. Cacciari and Tabossi (1993: xiii) point out that the difficulty of defining

idioms precisely might be one possible reason why they have been studied so little. My aim here is to attempt to grasp the essence of an idiom on the basis of theoretical literature and the characterizations provided there.

According to Fernando (1996: 3), the three most commonly mentioned characteristics of idioms are their *compositeness*, *institutionalization/conventionality* and *semantic opacity*. However, on the basis of the theoretical literature which I have acquainted myself with, I consider it necessary to complement Fernando's statement by a few additions. In addition to the characteristics outlined by Fernando, various scholars also seem to define *lexical fixity*, *collocability* and *semantic unity* as the essential characteristics of idioms. Furthermore, *ambiguity* (or *disinformation potential*) could also be counted as one feature, although it is closely related to the concept of semantic opacity. I will now take a closer look at these characteristics.

Compositeness means that idioms are multiword expressions which function just like single-word expressions. For instance Makkai (1972), Cowie and Mackin (1975), Strässler (1982) and Weinreich (1969) underline that idioms are composed of a minimum of two words. Cowie and Mackin (1975: viii) define an idiom as "a combination of two or more words", Makkai (1972: 122) states that an idiom is made up of "more than one minimal free form or word", and Weinreich (1969: 42) concludes that only multiword expressions are acceptable as idioms. However, Fernando (1996: 3) also notes that there are some scholars according to whom single-word expressions can also qualify as idioms.

Institutionalization, on the other hand, refers to the fact that idioms are conventionalized expressions (Fernando 1996: 3). The expression must be well-established and conventionally fixed in order to qualify as an idiom. Institutionalization is one of Makkai's (1972) and Fernando's (1996) salient criteria for identifying idioms.

Semantic opacity or *non-literality* can perhaps be considered as the most frequently mentioned feature of idioms. Semantic opacity means that idioms are often non-literal, which is why their meaning cannot be deducted from the meanings of the

individual words of the idiom. Hence, the individual words which make up the idiom do not carry any meaning of their own. There is usually very little, if any, connection between the literal meanings of the individual words and the idiomatic meaning of the whole phrase (Fernando 1996: 61). Makkai (1972: 118) states that the meaning of an idiom is not predictable from its component parts, because they are used in a figurative, non-literal sense. Non-literalness is also in central place in Strässler's (1982: 79) idea of an idiom: according to him, the meaning of an idiom cannot be concluded by adding up the meanings of its constituents. The meaning of an idiom is therefore hardly ever the sum of its individual parts. Semantic opacity seems rather crucial for idioms, seeing as the scholars quoted here are only some of the many who recognize semantic opacity or non-literalness as an essential feature of idioms.

Scholars who recognize *lexical fixity* (or *lexical integrity*) as an idiom's essential feature, are for instance Cowie and Mackin (1975), Strässler (1982) and Fernando (1996). According to Fernando (1996: 30) idioms are "indivisible units" whose constituents do not usually allow much variation. Those idioms which can be modified, can only be modified within certain limits and they have only a limited range of possible variants (ibid.). Cowie and Mackin (1975: ix) consider lexical integrity as the most characterizing feature of idioms: more often than not an idiom cannot be altered in terms of its structural composition, i.e. it should not be possible to break the unity of the expression by replacing the idiom's components by some other components.

However, Cowie and Mackin (1975: xii) simultaneously acknowledge that there are, as always, exceptions to the rule: some idioms do allow internal variation to some extent or substitution of a word by another word. It should be noted that the possibility of variation depends heavily on the idiom in question. Some idioms cannot undergo even the simplest substitutions, deletions or other variations, whereas others may freely allow the possibility of some internal changes. The point, in any case, is that the vast majority of idioms are invariable *to a greater or lesser extent*, i.e. they do not allow internal variation the way "normal", non-idiomatic expressions do. Fernando (1996: 43) concludes that these constraints on word replacements and word order are an important difference between idioms and non-idiomatic expressions.

Collocability is also mentioned in some idiom characterizations, though not as frequently as the above-mentioned characteristics. Collocability refers to the tendency of words to co-occur. In fact, idioms have come to existence precisely because of this tendency. Fernando (1996: 31) points out that collocability very often gives rise to idiomatic expressions, but obviously not all of these expressions become idioms. According to Weinreich (1969, as cited by Fernando 1996: 7), the co-occurrence of words is a feature which is present in both collocations and idioms, but in an idiom this co-occurrence of words results in "a special semantic relationship", which separates them from collocations.

The sixth feature of idioms which is mentioned rather often in theoretical literature is *semantic unity*. Although idioms are nearly always multiword expressions, they sometimes function as single semantic units. This concerns especially phrasal verbs. According to Cowie and Mackin (1975: ix), this semantic unity makes it possible to substitute a verb + particle construction for a single-word verb which has the same meaning; for instance the idiomatic expression *take off* can be matched by a non-idiomatic synonymic expression *mimic*. Cowie and Mackin (ibid.) therefore stress that idioms are "units of meaning" – a fact that distinguishes them from non-idiomatic expressions, which consist of distinct meaningful components.

One last feature of idioms which came up a couple of times in the theoretical literature, was *ambiguity* or *disinformation potential*. According to Weinreich (1969: 44), ambiguity is one of the most fundamental features of idioms: this ambiguity arises from the fact that the constituents of an idiom have literal equivalents in other contexts. In addition, in Makkai's (1972) definition of an idiom this ambiguity is in extremely central place. Makkai (ibid.: 122) claims that true idioms must carry disinformation potential (i.e. be ambiguous), and this is one of his salient criteria for identifying idioms. Makkai (ibid.) argues that idioms are often subject to "a possible lack of understanding despite familiarity with the meaning of the components." In Makkai's view this 'disinformation' occurs when the composition of the idiom leads the individual to understand the expression in a logical but erroneous way.

However, all scholars do not readily accept this 'disinformation potential' as a criterion for establishing idiomaticity. Cowie (1983, as quoted by Fernando 1996: 6) argues that this ambiguity which Makkai talks about is highly improbable in practice, because "the literal senses of idioms do not survive alongside their figurative ones in normal everyday use." In other words, people tend to first understand the figurative meaning of idioms rather than their literal meaning. Also Tabossi and Zardon (1993: 146) claim that it is the figurative meaning of an idiom which becomes available first, rather than the literal meaning of the phrase. In addition, Fernando (1996: 6.) argues that an adequate contextualization considerably minimizes the possibility of disinformation potential, which is why disinformation potential is relatively unlikely to occur. Furthermore, "situational improbability, as in *rain cats and dogs*, is yet another factor working against disinformation" (ibid.). Whereas disinformation potential therefore seems unlikely to occur when the listener is a native speaker, I would argue that for non-native speakers the possibility of understanding the idiom in an erroneous way does exist.

In conclusion, it could be said that idioms are quite multifaceted and complex in their very nature. Consequently, also the characterizations of idioms have been equally versatile and varied. Scholars have attempted to approach idioms from different viewpoints, hence various different characterizations exist. It seems rather difficult, if not entirely impossible, to determine what are the absolutely essential characteristics of idioms that differentiate them from non-idiomatic expressions - after all, there are nearly always exceptions to the rule. Idioms differ in their degree of fixity and opaqueness, for instance, which is exactly why clear-cut criteria for establishing idiomaticity cannot really be offered. As Cacciari (1993: 31) points out, it seems reasonable to adopt the view that idiomaticity is rather *a matter of degrees* in which the literal and figurative idioms are the ultimate extremities. This continuum includes a variety of expressions with varying degrees of figurativeness or fixity, for instance.

Because of the versatility of different sorts of idioms, it is rather difficult to classify all idioms under the same, clear-cut definition. The need to categorize different types of idioms is therefore quite evident, and scholars have, in fact, come up with various

categorization systems. These classifications will be looked at in the following section.

3.3 Types of idioms

As it probably became evident in the previous section, the scope of idiomaticity is quite extensive and the spectrum of different types of idioms is extremely versatile. It is, thus, no wonder that scholars have tried to clarify some of the confusion by classifying idioms into different categories on the basis of their degree of frozenness or opaqueness, for instance. In this section I will introduce some of those classifications. Since idioms differ greatly both in their character and composition, it indeed seems reasonable to provide categorizations for different types of idioms. Again, I will begin from the simplest classifications, moving on to more complicated and detailed ones.

According to Fernando (1996: 35), idioms can be grouped into three sub-classes: *pure idioms*, *semi-idioms* and *literal idioms*. A pure idiom is a type of "conventionalized, non-literal multiword expression" whose meaning cannot be understood by adding up the meanings of the words that make up the phrase (ibid.: 35-36). For example the expression 'spill the beans' is a pure idiom, because its real meaning has nothing to do with beans. A semi-idiom, on the other hand, has at least one literal element and one with a non-literal meaning (ibid.). 'Foot the bill' (i.e. 'pay') is one example of a semi-idiom, in which 'foot' is the non-literal element, whereas the word 'bill' is used literally. Finally, literal idioms, such as 'on foot' or 'on the contrary' are semantically less complex than the other two, and therefore easier to understand even if one is not familiar with these expressions (ibid.). However, these expressions do qualify as idioms because they are either completely invariant or allow only restricted variation. Fernando (ibid.: 37) admits that it is, of course, difficult to draw a clear boundary between these three idiom types as well as restricted and unrestricted collocations. For instance semi-idioms and restricted collocations overlap to some extent.

A classification provided by Cowie, Mackin and McGraig (1983: xii-xiii) is similar to that of Fernando's in regards of the fact that they, too, have classified idioms into three categories on the basis of the degree of opacity in the expressions. However, Cowie et al. replace Fernando's literal idioms by figurative idioms, thus providing the following idiom categories: *pure idioms*, *figurative idioms* and *restricted collocations* (or *semi-idioms*). Their pure and semi-idioms are the same as those in Fernando's classification. Figurative idioms overlap to some extent with pure idioms, but in these expressions even the slightest variations or substitutions cannot usually be made (ibid.: xiii). This classification differs from that of Fernando's also in respect of restricted collocations. Cowie et al. make no distinction between semi-idioms and restricted collocations, but classify them under the same category and count them both as idioms. Cowie et al. (ibid.) argue that restricted collocations differ from open collocations in that they do not allow internal changes.

The vast family of idioms can also be approached from more specified viewpoints. The diversity of different sorts of idioms makes it possible to examine them from various different perspectives, as one can group them on the basis of their structure, semantics or function, for instance. For example lexicogrammatical categorizations have been suggested by some scholars: Carter (1987, as cited in Fernando 1996: 70) gives a categorization based on collocational restriction, lexicogrammatical structure and semantic opacity, whereas Fernando's (1996: 70-71) classification is based on the degree of lexical variance in idioms. Others, such as Halliday (1985, in Fernando 1996: 72-74), have come up with functional categorizations.

On the basis of the function of the phrase, Halliday (1985, as quoted by Fernando 1996: 72) has grouped idioms into ideational, interpersonal and relational idioms. *Ideational idioms* "either signify *message content*, experiential phenomena including the sensory, the affective, and the evaluative, or they characterize the *nature of the message*" (ibid.). These expressions may describe actions ('tear down', 'spill the beans'), events ('turning point'), situations ('be in a pickle'), people and things ('a red herring'), attributes ('cut-and-dried'), evaluations ('a watched pot never boils') or emotions ('green with envy'). *Interpersonal idioms*, on the other hand, "fulfil either an interactional function or they characterize the nature of the message": they can, for

instance, initiate or keep up an interaction between people and maintain politeness (ibid.: 73). These expressions include greetings and farewells ('good morning'), directives ('let's face it'), agreements ('say no more'), "feelers" which elicit opinions ('what do you think?') and rejections ('come off it'). Finally, Halliday (ibid.: 74) distinguishes *relational (or textual) idioms*, which ensure that the discourse is cohesive and coherent. Examples of relational idioms are 'on the contrary', 'in addition to' and 'on the other hand'.

Some theorists have come up with more detailed and complicated classifications for idioms. According to Strässler (1982: 42), Adam Makkai's book *Idiom structure in English* (1972) is "the most extensive work ever written on idioms", which is why I feel it is important to take a look at Makkai's classifications in this context. Makkai (1972: 117) identifies, first of all, two major types of idioms: those of *encoding* and those of *decoding*, of which the latter are the focus of Makkai's book. Makkai (ibid.) classifies idioms of decoding into *lexemic* and *sememic* idioms.

Makkai presents six sub-classes for lexemic idioms. First of all, *phrasal verb idioms* are combinations of a verb and an adverb, such as the expressions 'give in' and 'put up' (Makkai 1972: 135). Secondly, Makkai (ibid.: 148) recognizes *tournure idioms*, which differ from phrasal verbs as they consist of a minimum of three lexons and "have a compulsory *it* in a fixed position between the verb and the adverb". Examples are, for instance, 'have it out (with)' and 'have it in for'. The third category, according to Makkai (ibid.: 155), involves *irreversible binomials*, which are formulas "consisting of parts A and B joined by a finite set of links". The order of these expressions is fixed, which is why it cannot usually be reversed (for instance 'dollars and cents', 'here and there' and 'head over heels').

Makkai's (ibid.: 164) fourth category for lexemic idioms is *phrasal compound idioms*, which refer to expressions such as 'houseboy' or 'lukewarm'. *Incorporating verb idioms*, on the other hand, include expressions such as 'eavesdrop', 'baby-sit', and 'sight-see' (ibid.: 168). Finally, *pseudo-idioms* include "all lexemic idioms one of whose constituents is a cranberry morph". (ibid.: 169) Examples of pseudo-idioms are 'chit-chat' and 'kith and kin'.

Sememic idioms also include several sub-classes. *First base idioms* have their origin in cultural institutions such as American baseball, one example being the phrase 'never to get to the first base' (Makkai 1972: 172). *Idioms of institutionalized politeness*, on the other hand, refer to expressions such as 'may I...?' or 'would you mind..?' (ibid.). Thirdly, Makkai (ibid.: 173) distinguishes *idioms of institutionalized detachment or indirectness*, which include expressions such as 'it seems that...'. *Idioms of proposals encoded as questions* are expressions which are used to indicate an offer or a proposal in the form of a question, e.g. 'how about a drink', or 'would you care to see our new baby' (ibid.: 174).

The fourth category of sememic idioms which Makkai (1972: 175) identifies is *idioms of institutionalized greeting*, which include expressions such as 'how do you do?' and 'so long!'. *Proverbial idioms with a moral* are, rather self-explanatorily, proverbs with a 'moral', for instance the expression 'don't count your chickens before they're hatched' (ibid.: 176). *Familiar quotations* include common sayings such as 'there's beggary in the love that can be reckoned' (ibid.: 177). *Institutionalized understatements*, on the other hand, aim to decrease the impoliteness of a blunt statement, e.g. 'I wasn't too crazy about it' or 'he wasn't exactly my cup of tea' (ibid.: 178). The final sub-class of sememic idioms are *institutionalized hyperbole idioms*, i.e. overstatements which use highly exaggerated word choices to describe a situation (ibid.). For instance the expressions 'he won't even lift a finger' to describe laziness or 'cold as a witch's tit' to describe coldness, are examples of institutionalized hyperbole idioms.

Although Makkai's classification introduced above might seem relatively broad, there are scholars who have come up with even more extensive classification systems. For instance Healey (1968, as quoted by Strässler 1982: 29) has come up with as many as 21 different idiom categories. Moreover, Hockett's (1958: 310) classification is also rather all-embracing, as he has classified for example such expressions as proper names, allusions and abbreviations as types of idioms.

It should be quite clear by now that the concept of idiom has been interpreted somewhat differently by different people. The diversity of idiom classifications introduced in this section does say a great deal about the vastness of the concept and the rather far-reaching scope of idiomaticity. The most important task of this chapter was to pay attention to the existence of different categories of idioms as well as to demonstrate how extensive the concept of an idiom in reality is. After considering these different interpretations and classifications, I may move towards my own definition of an idiom which will be used in this research. My own definition of an idiom will be provided later on in section 5.3. Next, however, I will take a closer look at the issue that this study is ultimately all about: the translation of idioms.

4 TRANSLATING IDIOMS

In all languages there are a great number of idioms - unique, language-fixed expressions whose meaning cannot be deducted from the individual words of the phrase. Since each language has its own way of expressing certain things, idiomatic expressions are always language- and culture-specific. An expression in one language may not exist in some other language, or the language may have a very different expression to convey the same meaning. This is why the translation of idioms may sometimes be rather problematic. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize what translation theorists have said about the translation of idioms. After introducing these theoretical considerations, I will be able to discuss and compare the correlation between the theoretical recommendations and actual reality, with special reference to Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*.

As said, due to the language-specific nature of idioms, their translation can be somewhat challenging at times. Idioms must be recognized, understood and analyzed before appropriate translation methods can be considered. One must, first of all, be able to spot idioms from a text - it is absolutely crucial that a translator recognizes an idiom when s/he sees one. The ability to identify idioms is of enormous importance, since their meaning should never be understood literally. As Ingo (1990: 247) puts it, the translator must first analyze what the writer has intended to say before s/he can even think of translating the expression. Larson (1984: 143) agrees, as he argues that the first crucial step in the translation of idioms is to be absolutely certain of the meaning of the source language idiom. Therefore the most important issue in translating idioms is the ability to distinguish the difference between the literal meaning and the real meaning of the expression (Ingo 1990: 248). This is why recognizing and being able to use idioms appropriately requires excellent command over the source language.

It is, thus, only after identifying the non-literal meaning of the idiom that a translator can even think of translating the expression into the target language. In addition to being able to recognize idioms in a source text, the translator must also be able to use idioms fluently and competently in the target language (Larson 1984: 116). Not only

does a translator need to master the source language, but s/he must also be able to express him/herself in the target language fluently and smoothly. Larson (*ibid.*) stresses the importance of the ability to use target language idioms naturally, because that ensures that the translator can produce smooth and lively target language text as well as preserve the stylistic features of the source text.

The final difficulty, then, is to find a TL expression with the same meaning. The problem lies in the fact that an idiomatic expression in one language rather often does not have an equivalent expression in another language. The translator has to think of an appropriate translation strategy for the phrase. Next, I will discuss some recommended translation strategies for idioms.

In general, translation theorists recognize three different translation strategies for idioms: translating an idiom with a non-idiom, translating an idiom with an idiom, and translating an idiom literally. Some, such as Ingo (1990: 247), also count the strategy of translating a non-idiomatic expression with an idiom as one possible strategy. Nida and Taber (1969: 106) exclude the literal translation strategy and suggest three translation strategies for idioms: translating idioms with non-idioms, translating idioms with idioms, and translating non-idioms with idioms. Nida and Taber (*ibid.*) claim that most frequently source language idioms can only be translated with target language non-idioms, although they also admit that sometimes it is indeed possible to match a source language idiom by an equivalent target language idiom. Nida and Taber (*ibid.*) also point out that idioms and other figurative expressions usually suffer a great deal of semantic adjustments in translation, since an idiom in one language rarely has the same meaning and function in another language as such.

The most recommended translation strategy for idioms is translating them with a natural target language idiom which has the same meaning as the original source language idiom. For instance according to Ingo (1990: 246), idioms should always be translated with a semantically and stylistically corresponding idiom in the target language. Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 24), on the other hand, suggests that idioms should be translated on the basis of the function of the phrase: the source language idiom should be replaced by a target language idiom that has the same meaning and

function in the TL culture as the SL idiom has in the SL culture. Newmark (1981: 8) proposes yet another challenge for the translation of idioms: according to him, the original SL idiom and its translation should be equally frequent in the two languages. However, it seems somewhat impossible to carry out this recommendation in practice, since it is rather difficult to estimate the frequency of certain expressions in certain languages.

The benefits of the strategy of matching an idiom by an idiom are related to the stylistic balance between the source and target language texts. By translating source language idioms with corresponding target language idioms, the style and manner of expression of the source text can be conveyed also to the target language text. The translator should therefore make every effort to find a corresponding target language idiom for a source language idiom - if there is none available, the idiom should be translated with a "normal", non-idiomatic expression which conveys the same meaning.

In translation theory in general, literal translation is generally considered to be the worst possible translation strategy – the same seems to apply to the translation of idioms. For instance according to Larson (1984: 116), a literal translation of an idiom will usually result in complete nonsense in the target language. Also Newmark (1981: 125) stresses that idioms should never be translated word for word. Ingo (1990: 246) agrees with Larson and Newmark, stating that literal translation of an idiom is rarely successful, and should therefore be avoided at all costs.

Why is the literal translation strategy considered to be such a failed translation strategy, then? Most scholars claim that a literal translation conveys 'foreign' elements into the target language text, which are generally considered unacceptable (Larson 1984: 15). For instance Serazin (1999: 30) argues that the traditional view in translation theory has been that foreign elements seriously disturb the structure of a literary work, and Nida (1964: 16) points out that word-for-word translation damages both the meaning and the beauty of the original expression. However, the purpose of this research is also to deliberate if the literal translation strategy could, after all, work in some instances. It is quite obvious that a literal translation of an idiom simply does

not work in most cases, but on the basis of the research done for this study, it seems that in some cases a literal translation can function rather well.

What characterizes the theory of translating idioms quite strongly is the view that a great deal of the vividness and style of the source language text is lost when the translator attempts to translate idioms into the target language. According to Newmark (1981: 7), there is an unavoidable loss of meaning when the text includes expressions which are unique and peculiar to the source language and culture. Idioms represent precisely this 'peculiarity' which Newmark talks about: they are nearly always language-fixed and cannot usually be understood in another language if translated literally.

In fact, what is striking in these theoretical considerations of translation, is the fact that so many translation theorists only speak about how much is lost in translation – especially in the translation of idioms, since they more often than not cannot be translated to the target language as idioms. Nida and Taber (1969) seem to be among the few theorists who also pay attention to what can be gained through translation, as they also consider the translation of source language non-idioms with target language idioms as one possible strategy. After all, various other translation theorists seem to have totally ignored this strategy.

Nida and Taber (1969: 106) make a clever point by stating that although all translation exercises involve an inevitable loss of a number of idioms (at least in the case of longer texts), some idioms can also be gained in the process. This is, in my view, an extremely important point. Translation is not all about 'losing' meaning and impoverishing the language, but sometimes something can also be gained in the process of translation. Thus, whereas each translation process involves a loss of a number of idioms, some of these losses can be compensated for by adding target language idioms elsewhere in the text. As Nida and Taber (1969: 106) put it, "such idiomatic renderings do much to make the translation come alive, for it is by means of such distinctive expressions that the message can speak meaningfully to people in terms of their own lives and behavior."

Compensation is therefore a strategy most definitely worth considering. Vehmas-Lehto (2002: 41) pays attention to the compensation strategy by stating that it can be used in translation when a source language element does not have an equivalent in the target language: these stylistic losses can be compensated for by adding similar elements somewhere else in the text. Also Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 30) argues that "what is often seen as 'lost' from the source language context can be replaced in the target language context". Compensation is therefore one possible strategy for dealing with idioms – and quite an effective one, for that matter. This way the rich and lively language use of the original text can be preserved in the translation.

Although the compensative strategy has not received a great deal attention within the field of translation theory, Lefevere (1992: 105) claims that most translators do, in fact, use the compensative strategy in some way. Lefevere (*ibid.*) states that a translator relies on the compensative strategy when s/he has not, at some point, been able to reproduce the same effect as the original text, and therefore adds similar features elsewhere, which can be said to be "in the spirit of the original". The compensative strategy is not therefore used only in the case of idioms, but can be applied in order to compensate for other kinds of 'translational losses' as well.

This compensative strategy in which original non-idioms are shifted to target language idioms most certainly deserves to be investigated in greater detail, which is exactly what this research aims to do, as I have included this strategy in my analysis. Since this strategy is often neglected in theoretical considerations of translation, I feel it is important to pay attention to this strategy - especially in the context of investigating the translation of idioms, which are often considered difficult to translate.

5 DATA AND METHODS

Before moving on to the empirical part of this study, a few words about the data collection process are in order at this point. In this chapter I will provide some background information on how I collected the data, explicate the working definition of an idiom and point out some problems which occurred during the data collection process. Furthermore, the research object of this study will be described.

5.1 The author Donna Tartt and the book *The Secret History*

Donna Tartt is an American writer born in 1963. *The Secret History* was her first novel which was published in 1992. The book was an instant success and it quickly became a bestseller. So far it has been translated into 24 languages. In addition to *The Secret History*, the author has published another novel called *The Little Friend* and some short stories.

The Secret History is a murder mystery told in retrospect. The story revolves around six classics students at a Vermont college. The events are narrated by Richard Papen, a young man in his twenties, who is unhappy with his life in California and decides to move to Vermont to study English literature at Hampden College. He wishes to take Ancient Greek as a minor subject, but soon discovers that the teacher of classical languages, Julian Morrow, is extremely selective of his students and refuses to take any more students in addition to the five students he already has in his class. Richard becomes extremely intrigued by this mysterious group of classics students and secretly observes them at school. Soon Richard manages to turn Julian's head around, and he becomes a member of the classics students group, who study and spend their free time entirely isolated from the rest of the college.

Little by little Richard learns to know his new fellow students. The unquestionable authority of the group is Henry Winter, a wise and serious intellect whose greatest passion in life is Ancient Greek. Edmund 'Bunny' Corcoran, on the other hand, is the extreme opposite of Henry; he is a childish, happy-go-lucky clown of the group, who

does not take as much interest in classical languages as he does, for instance, in leading an easy life. Then there are the charming twins Charles and Camilla Macaulay, who are immensely friendly and polite, but who Richard simultaneously finds rather mysterious. The final member of the group is Francis Abernathy, a well-mannered and easygoing homosexual. Also the ever-so-charming teacher of theirs, Julian, is a central character of the book.

As said, Richard tells the story of the group in retrospect, unravelling step by step the horrific events that have taken place within the group. Early in the book the life of the six college students is delightfully charming and relaxed: they are extremely close with each other and spend all of their time isolated from the rest of the world in their own dream-like universe, without the slightest of worries.

However, early on in the novel the reader discovers that there have been two murders, to which the members of the group have been party. Henry, Francis, Charles and Camilla have accidentally killed an innocent farmer during a bacchanal, from which Richard and Bunny have been excluded. Bunny learns about the killing later on, feels hurt for being left out and threatens to report the group to the police. The reader then learns that Bunny, too, has been murdered - by his closest friends, the other members of the group. The story then reveals the unfortunate events which eventually lead to the murder of Bunny. The rest of the novel deals with the aftermath of Bunny's death and how the group starts to slowly disintegrate.

The Secret History is definitely not a traditional murder mystery, since the murderers are revealed already at the beginning of the book. Instead, the suspense in this book derives from the relations between the members of the group, who one by one start collapsing because of the pressure and guilt that their actions have caused them. Soon after Bunny's death the friends start drifting apart from each other and eventually the whole group is splintered. The tragic events finally lead to Henry shooting himself to death. All members of the group end up living far away from each other and leading miserable lives. The story has often been often compared to a traditional Greek tragedy.

The Secret History was chosen as the research object of this study because it uses extremely figurative language and therefore contains a great deal of figurative expressions such as idioms, for instance. The fact that the book contains an extraordinarily high number of idioms makes the book an ideal research object in regards of my research topic. The multitude of idiomatic expressions provides a fruitful basis for the investigation of idioms and their translation.

5.2 Research method

The method by which the data was gathered was by collecting the English idioms from *The Secret History* and finding their Finnish equivalents from the Finnish translation of the book. Since I also wanted to examine cases where an English non-idiom had been translated with a Finnish idiom, I read the Finnish translation again and tried to find Finnish language idioms in places where there originally was a non-idiom in the source language context. All the expressions chosen for the analysis were picked according to the working definition of an idiom, which will be defined in greater detail in the following section. If there was still any sort of uncertainty in deciding whether a certain expression was an idiom or not, I consulted idiom dictionaries.

After collecting the data for my study I proceeded to a more detailed analysis. The methodology used in the analysis of idioms is empirical and descriptive, which means that I did not have any hypotheses or pre-expectations in mind when I started examining the data. I was not therefore looking for anything in particular from the data, but carefully examined the material in order to find meaningful themes and general patterns. Following the principles of inductive reasoning, the aim was to describe the collected data and make generalizations and conclusions on the basis of the findings. The purpose was to find out what exactly happens to idioms in the translation process and provide a detailed and versatile characterization of the phenomenon.

This study is qualitative by nature, but some quantitative methods will be used in the analysis of the data. Some figures and statistics will be used, as I will calculate the percentage proportion of each translation strategy and compare them to each other.

However, before I could carry out the research I needed a precise and clearly explicated definition of an idiom, with the help of which I could identify idioms from non-idioms. In the next section I will provide the working definition of an idiom which was used in this research, and give details on how I dealt with complicated borderline cases.

5.3 The working definition of an idiom

As it became evident in the theoretical considerations of idioms in chapter 3, defining an idiom is anything but an easy task. Definitions vary from person to person, and an entirely straightforward, universal definition of an idiom does not exist. This is the reason why I needed to come up with my own definition of an idiom. It is crucially important to define precisely what kind of expressions are considered to be idioms in this study, because that definition provides the grounds for carrying out the entire research. Had there not been a precise definition, it would not have been possible to carry out this research in the first place.

The definition which will be used in this particular research is based on earlier theoretical considerations of idioms introduced in chapter 3, on the basis of which I have come up with a specific idiom definition for this research. In this study, thus, an idiom must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Compositeness. An idiom is a compound of two or more words, which is why only multiword expressions will be accepted as idioms in this study.
- 2) Conventionality. The expression must be well-established and conventionally fixed.

- 3) Semantic opacity, i.e. figurativeness. The meaning of the idiom must be figurative and it cannot be understood by adding up the meanings of the individual elements of the expression.

Thus, an idiom in this study is defined as *a conventionalized, multiword expression whose meaning cannot be deducted from the meaning of the individual components of the whole phrase.*

Following the definition above, I examined the data and classified the expressions which I had collected from the book either as idioms or non-idioms. This task was by no means an easy and straightforward one, since there were a number of borderline cases which could be classified in either one of the groups. In complicated borderline cases I considered whether the expression would make any sense if it was translated literally into another language.

The most important criterion on which I, thus, based my decision to include or exclude certain problematic cases in the study, was semantic opacity. Semantic opacity or non-literalness of the phrase was the crucial factor which *ultimately* determined which expressions I included in this research. If I was unsure whether a certain phrase was an idiom or not, the crucial factor in making the decision was whether the expression could be comprehended when translated literally. If the expression was transparent (i.e. it could be understood without any considerable difficulties even when understood literally), I ruled it a non-idiom and excluded the expression from the data. Following the same logic, expressions which were opaque or semi-opaque (i.e. the expression made little or no sense when understood literally) were counted as idioms and included in the data. Semantic opacity or figurativeness was therefore in central place in coping with complicated borderlines cases.

However, sometimes even the ultimate criterion of semantic opacity was not enough to determine whether some expressions should be counted as idioms or not. The fact that idioms represent an extremely complex and diverse group of expressions made the task rather demanding and complicated. Therefore in borderline cases I consulted three idiom dictionaries: *The Oxford dictionary of idioms* (2000), *The Cambridge*

international dictionary of idioms (1998) and *The Collins Cobuild idioms dictionary* (2004). If a certain expression was to be found in any of these books, I counted the expression as an idiom and included it in the analysis. If a borderline expression was not found in any of these dictionaries, it automatically meant exclusion from this study.

After determining which expressions met the criteria of an idiom, I classified all the remaining examples into two major groups. The first group consists of so-called "actual" idioms, which I roughly classified as pure idioms or semi-idioms. The second group, on the other hand, includes phrasal verb idioms. Following Fernando's (1996: 35-36) definitions, a pure idiom is defined as a conventionalized, non-literal expression whose meaning cannot be understood by adding up the meanings of the words that make up the phrase, while a semi-idiom is defined as a type of idiom which has at least one literal element and one with a non-literal subsense.

For phrasal verbs the criterion was that the phrasal verb must possess idiomatic quality in order to be included in the data. A phrasal verb is generally defined as a combination of either 'a verb and a preposition', 'a verb and an adverb', or a 'verb with both an adverb and a preposition'. However, since this research is interested only in figurative, idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs whose meaning is literal were excluded from the data. For instance phrasal verbs such as *look around* or *run off* do not qualify as idioms, because expressions like these are used literally and their meaning is therefore entirely transparent. Therefore only phrasal verbs whose meaning is figurative were included in this study.

5.4 Description of the data

The material for this study was collected from Donna Tartt's novel *The Secret History* and its Finnish translation *Jumalat juhliivat öisin*, which was translated by Eva Siikarla. The idioms were collected according to the working definitions of an idiom explicated in the previous section. The data of the present study consists of altogether 625 English idiomatic expressions and their Finnish translations. 475 of

these expressions were pure or semi-idioms and 150 were phrasal verbs. Furthermore, the data includes a total of 26 cases where a non-idiomatic expression in English has been translated with a Finnish idiom.

As I already stated in section 5.1, this particular book was chosen as the research object because of its highly figurative and idiomatic use of language. The high number of idiomatic expressions in this book ensures that the data collected captures a variety of idiomatic expressions. Because of its large size, the material is versatile and many-sided. In order to examine the translation strategies of idioms, it is important that the data includes different kinds of idioms both in terms of semantics and syntax. The book uses extremely rich language and contains plenty of idiomatic expressions, metaphors and other figurative expressions, which makes it an ideal piece of literature for investigating English idiomatic expressions as well as their Finnish translations.

Since the data is rather large in size, I have decided to exclude some of the commonest and most ordinary expressions from the data, such as *make sense*, *take a chance* or *make a difference*. This decision is based on the fact that the meaning of this sort of common, everyday expressions is rather transparent and even non-native speakers understand these expressions straight away. Furthermore, I believe that the quality of the data takes priority of the quantity: in other words, it seems reasonable to only analyze expressions which are highly idiomatic, rather than a large number of common, everyday expressions whose meaning is more or less self-evident. After all, this research is primarily interested in highly figurative expressions which are used in a non-literal sense. The data is still rather massive as it is, which is why the exclusion of the most workaday expressions did not affect the research results in any way. The results would have been substantially the same even if these common expressions had been included in the data.

Some idioms appeared multiple times in the data. Each occurrence of a certain idiom was included in the data as an entry of its own, because sometimes the translator had used a different word choice or an entirely different strategy to translate a certain idiom. Furthermore, the data also includes idioms which have been somehow

modified or extended. Finally, I have also included idiomatic similes (e.g. *blind as a bat*) and some common, idiomatic sayings (e.g. *never judge a book by its cover*) in the analysis.

In the upcoming sections I will introduce various idiom examples which were collected from the books. The page number on which the idiom can be found will be given in brackets after each example. It should be noted that in this study I am referring to the paperback version of *The Secret History* by The Penguin Books (published in 1993), and to the eighth impression of *Jumalat juhliivat öisin*, which was published in 2003 by WSOY.

6 ANALYSIS OF DATA

This empirical section of the study focuses on describing and analyzing the collected data. First, an overview of the adopted translation strategies and some figures and statistics of the strategies will be given. After that I will move on to analyze the applied translation strategies in greater detail: various examples from the data will be given and the data will be described in terms of semantics and syntax, for instance.

6.1 Adopted translation strategies

After collecting all the English idioms from Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* and finding their Finnish translations from *Jumalat juhliivat öisin*, I classified the idioms into different categories according to the strategy used to translate them. The translator appeared to have used three different translation strategies for idioms. These strategies were:

- 1) translating an English-language idiom with a non-idiomatic Finnish expression
- 2) translating an English idiom with a Finnish idiom, and
- 3) translating an English idiom literally, although the expression was not an idiom in Finnish as such.

I discovered that the vast majority of the collected English idioms were pure idioms, semi-idioms or phrasal verb idioms. I therefore classified all the collected idioms into two major groups. The first group contained pure idioms and semi-idioms, and the second group contained phrasal verbs. All in all 475 of these idioms were pure or semi-idioms and 150 were phrasal verbs.

My decision to separate phrasal verbs from other idioms is based on the fact that the Finnish language has very few phrasal verbs to begin with, whereas in the English language they are particularly frequent. Because of this rather significant difference between the two languages, I considered it necessary to analyze the translation strategies for phrasal verbs separately, because the fact is that the vast majority of

these 'verb + preposition' expressions in English can only be translated as non-idiomatic single-word verbs into Finnish.

I therefore counted the frequency of the applied translation strategies separately for phrasal verb idioms and other idioms (i.e. pure idioms and semi-idioms). All in all I collected 475 pure or semi-idioms from the book, and the table below illustrates how pure idioms and semi-idioms were translated. The numbers represent the total number of pure and semi-idioms translated by using each strategy, and the percentage represents the percentage proportion of each strategy.

Table 1. Translation strategies for pure idioms and semi-idioms.

Translation strategy	Number (pcs)	Percentage (%)
SL idiom was translated with a TL non-idiom	241	51%
SL idiom was translated with a TL idiom	223	47%
SL idiom was translated literally	11	2%
Total	475	100%

As can be seen from Table 1, the most frequently used translation strategy for pure and semi-idioms in this particular study was translating a source language idiom with a non-idiomatic target language expression: it was used in approximately 51% of all cases. Translating a source language idiom with a corresponding target language idiom was the second popular translation strategy: it was used in 47% of all cases. Literal translation strategy was the least used strategy, as it was used in only 2% of all cases.

The results for the translation strategies of phrasal verbs were somewhat different. As said, this is due to the fact that English phrasal verbs cannot usually be translated as idioms into Finnish, but most often have non-idiomatic single-word equivalents in Finnish. I collected altogether 150 phrasal verbs from the book which can be considered to have idiomatic quality. Again, in the table below the numbers represent the total number of phrasal verbs translated by using each strategy, and the percentage represents the percentage proportion of each strategy.

Table 2. Translation strategies for phrasal verbs.

Translation strategy	Number (pcs)	Percentage (%)
SL phrasal verb was translated with a TL non-idiom	134	89%
SL phrasal verb was translated with a TL idiom	16	11%
SL phrasal verb was translated literally	0	0%
Total	150	100%

As Table 2 illustrates, the vast majority of phrasal verb idioms were translated with non-idiomatic expressions in Finnish: altogether 134 phrasal verbs were translated by using this strategy, thus representing a staggering 89% of the phrasal verbs altogether. Only 16 phrasal verbs, approximately 11% of the whole data, were translated with Finnish idioms. Literal translation strategy was not used at all for phrasal verbs.

In addition to these actual translation strategies for idioms, I also wanted to examine cases where an English non-idiom had been translated with a Finnish idiom. Hence, after collecting the English idioms and their translations, I read through the Finnish translation of the book again and tried to find Finnish idioms in places where there originally was a non-idiomatic English expression. This method of translating a non-idiomatic source-language expression with a target-language idiom is the fourth strategy which I will be examining in this study: it is not really a translation strategy *for idioms* as such, but it is a translation strategy nevertheless, and very much relevant in the context of examining the translation of idioms. Since a large number of source language idioms cannot be translated as idioms into another language (as evident by the results of this study, too), some of these idiomatic losses can be compensated for elsewhere in the text. The compensative strategy is therefore one possible strategy to deal with idiomatic expressions in terms of translation.

Since this research is inductive and descriptive by nature, I did not have any specific hypotheses in mind when I started analyzing the data. Rather, the purpose was to make observations on the data and describe the findings. Hence, after classifying the data according to the applied translation strategy, I analyzed the samples in each category and looked for any possible general patterns in them.

Next, I will present and analyze my findings in greater detail. In the first category (idioms translated with non-idiomatic expressions), I will examine whether the expressions which had not been translated with Finnish idioms, were mostly phrasal verbs or pure or semi-idioms in English, and what may be the reasons for translating them with non-idiomatic expressions. I will also examine what kinds of phrases this category involved in terms of their syntactic structure, and whether these syntactic structures remained constant in the translation process.

In the second category (source language idioms translated with target language idioms) I analyzed both the English idioms and their corresponding Finnish translations and looked for any translational patterns in them. The main focus of the analysis in this category is on the figurative imagery used in the idioms, as I will compare the English idioms to their Finnish equivalents and analyze the similarities

and differences between them. Furthermore, I will analyze the syntactic structures of the idioms. Last, I will take a brief look at idiomatic similes in this category.

In the third category (literally translated idioms), I will take a look at the phrases that had been translated literally and analyze why the translator might have chosen to use this rather unordinary strategy. In addition, I will evaluate the intelligibility of these translations, i.e. I will analyze whether these literal translations were successful and fully understandable to a Finnish reader.

Finally, I will analyze the 'compensative' strategy in which non-idiomatic English-language expressions had been translated with Finnish-language idioms. The data in this category is rather small, but I will nevertheless analyze the expressions and ponder the reasons for using this strategy.

6.2 Translating a source language idiom with a non-idiomatic expression

Since idioms are nearly always language-specific material, it is rather unsurprising that the most popular translation strategy for idioms in this data was translating an idiom with a non-idiomatic expression. In pure and semi-idioms this strategy was used in 241 cases all in all, which is 51% of all cases. In the case of phrasal verb idioms this strategy was used in 89% of all cases.

The fact that this strategy was the most frequently used translation strategy partly confirms what translation theorists have said about the translation of idioms. To quote, for instance, Nida and Taber (1969: 106), "most frequently source language idioms are shifted to target language non-idioms", although the ideal is to find a target language idiom which has the same meaning as the original, source language idiom.

6.2.1 Pure idioms and semi-idioms

This category included 241 idioms which could roughly be classified as either pure idioms or semi-idioms. Below are some examples of English idioms which are pure idioms (i.e. idioms which are completely opaque and whose meaning cannot be deducted from the individual words of the phrase), which have been translated with "normal", non-idiomatic expressions in Finnish.

this rang a bell (63)	se kuulostikin tutulta (64)
had hit the mark (122)	olivat tehonneet (113)
any Vermonter worth his salt (204)	kunnon vermontilainen (180)
this'd hit the spot (175)	tämä taitaa olla hyvä (155)
at the end of my rope (200)	kestokykyni alkaa olla lopussa (176)
Henry's gonna have a ball with this (238)	Henry on onnessaan tästä (207)
just hot air (279)	pelkkää uhoamista (240)
if you want my two cents (368)	jos minulta kysytte (312)
come clean (411)	tunnustaa (347)
it wears a bit thin (229)	ei oikein onnistu (199)
Bunny would hem and haw (101)	Bunny vain mumisi jotain (95)

The English idioms above are what scholars call 'truly idiomatic': their literal meaning has nothing to do with the figurative meaning of the expression. This is the reason why they can be classified as pure idioms. Expressions such as *hit the spot*, *have a ball*, *hot air* and *come clean* are highly idiomatic, language-fixed expressions which would not make much sense if they were translated word-for-word into Finnish, for instance. These idioms were translated with non-idiomatic Finnish language expressions with the same meaning. The Finnish phrases *taittaa olla hyvä*, *olla onnessaan*, *pelkkää uhoamista* and *tunnustaa* do not have any idiomatic quality, unlike the original expressions. Pure idioms are so highly figurative and language-fixed that more often than not a similar expression does not exist in another language. It is therefore not a major surprise that various English pure idioms could

only be translated as non-idiomatic expressions into Finnish. Sometimes there simply is no alternative way.

In this category there were also a large number of semi-idioms, i.e. idioms which are only semi-opaque. In these idioms only one element is used in a figurative sense, while other elements in the expressions are used literally. Examples of semi-opaque English idioms which have been translated with non-idiomatic Finnish expressions are:

I kept late hours (98)	valvon myöhään (92)
footing his bills (165)	maksoi hänen laskunsa (147)
a bad hand at guessing (16)	mitenkään huono arvaamaan (24)
in the dead of night (47)	keskellä yötä (50)
fish in the pocket (296)	kaivella kylpytakin taskua (254)
shot cut an arm (24)	ojensi kätensä (31)
I'm afraid I don't follow (359)	en taida tajuta (305)
have a word with (13)	puhua (22)
never set foot (135)	koskaan käynyt (123)

For instance in the idioms *foot the bill* and *fish in the pocket* there is one constituent which is used in a figurative, non-literal sense. In *foot the bill* it is 'foot', and in *fish in the pocket* it is 'fish', whereas the other constituents in them, 'bill' and 'pocket' are used literally: they mean just what they normally mean and do not have any secondary meanings attached to them in this context. In their Finnish translations these figurative constituents are absent and they have been replaced by conventional verbs 'maksaa' ('pay') and 'kaivella' ('dig').

In expressions such as *in the dead of night* and *I don't follow*, the so-called "normal", conventional words 'middle' and 'understand' have been replaced by figurative elements 'dead' and 'follow'. The meanings of this sort of semi-idioms can perhaps sometimes be more or less transparent, but the fact that they contain rather striking figurative elements that have nothing to do with their normal, everyday meanings, makes them fall into the category of semi-idioms rather than non-idioms. Their

Finnish translations here, on the other hand, are entirely transparent and non-figurative.

Expressions such as *have a word with* and *set foot* can be classified as semi-idioms, because they both contain semi-figurative elements. In the expression *have a word with* the semi-figurative constituent is 'word', which is closely related to the action which it refers to: 'talk to somebody'. *Set foot*, on the other hand, refers to entering into some place. In this expression, too, the semi-figurative constituent 'foot' is closely related to the literal meaning which the expression refers to, 'walking'.

6.2.2 Phrasal verb idioms

All in all 150 phrasal verb idioms were collected from the book, of which the vast majority (89%) were translated with non-idiomatic expressions in Finnish. This is hardly surprising in regards of the fact that phrasal verbs are extremely frequent in the English language, and considerably more unusual in Finnish. The data in this category included the following expressions, for instance:

it would blow over (218)	hän unohtaisi sen (191)
loaded us down with work (353)	oli antanut paljon töitä (300)
set him off (250)	hän suuttui (217)
sink in (521)	tajusin (437)
running Henry down (594)	Henryn löytäminen (497)
he's getting by (651)	kyllä hän pärjää (543)
seeing them off (127)	tulla saattamaan (117)
zero in (255)	keskittyi (221)
had started to kick in (335)	oli alkanut vaikuttaa (284)
theme song died away (386)	teemamusiikin vaitessa (326)
I played along with the stomach-flu ruse (163)	hyväksyin vatsaflunssaselityksen (145)
bring Charles around (529)	selvittävän Charlesia (443)
had fallen through (578)	olisi epäonnistunut (483)
brace him up (484)	saavansa siitä rohkaisua (406)

cut me off (228)

lopettavat määrärahani (199)

Most English expressions in this category can be - and have been - translated with non-idiomatic, single-word expressions in Finnish. For example English phrasal verbs such as *sink in*, *get by*, *zero in*, *bring somebody around* and *fall through* have been translated with non-idiomatic Finnish verbs *tajuta*, *pärjätä*, *keskittyä*, *selvittää* and *epäonnistua*. Some English phrasal verbs do not have single-word equivalents in Finnish, but have been translated by explaining the meaning of the expression: for instance the phrasal verbs *brace somebody up* and *cut somebody off* have been translated with longer, explanatory expressions *saada rohkaisua* and *lopettaa määräraha*.

Most English phrasal verbs can, thus, be replaced by non-idiomatic Finnish-language verbs or they can be translated by explaining the meaning of the expression. Phrasal verbs do not therefore represent a major translational problem, although the idiomatic quality of the expressions is almost always lost in the translation process.

6.2.3 Syntactic structure

The category of translating an SL idiom with a non-idiomatic TL expression included a variety of expressions in terms of their syntactic structure. The abundance of verbal, adjective and prepositional phrases in this category seemed to be the most striking feature of the data. I will now take a closer look at these verbal, adjective and prepositional idioms that could not be translated into Finnish as idioms.

The majority of the expressions in this category were verbal idioms. Some verbal idioms have already been introduced previously in this section. A few more examples include, for instance, *to do the trick* (193) - *tehoaisi* (169), *let him off the hook* (64) - *päästäökseni hänet pulasta* (65), *let it run its course* (163) - *menee ohi aikanaan* (145), *put you on the spot* (479) - *nolata sinua* (402), and *he's gone AWOL* (629) - *hän on häipynyt* (527). Again, the English verbal constructions in these idioms are used in a highly figurative sense, while their Finnish translations are non-idiomatic, conventional verbs. Almost all English verbal idioms were translated with

a verbal construction also in Finnish. The syntactic form therefore remained constant in almost all cases.

The second largest group in this category were prepositional idioms. Their syntactic form changed almost always, since they were usually translated with nominal expressions in Finnish. Examples of English prepositional idioms in this category are *by and large* (299), *by a long shot* (409), *through and through* (301), *out of the blue* (626) and *for good* (544), which were translated into Finnish as *enimmäkseen* (257), *ehdottomasti* (345), *ihan kaikessa* (258), *ihan yllättäen* (524) and *lopullisesti* (456). Finnish language has very few prepositions to begin with, which is why it is no wonder that English prepositional idioms do not usually have corresponding idiomatic phrases in Finnish. When they do translate into Finnish as idioms, their syntactic structure usually changes (as illustrated in the upcoming section 6.3).

This category also included an abundance of adjective idioms, which were translated into Finnish as non-idiomatic expressions. English seems to contain plenty of adjectives which consist of two (or sometimes three) constituents, which have a different meaning when they appear separately. But when put together, these compounds gain a completely different meaning than their individual constituents normally have.

In this data I came across adjective idioms such as *thunderstruck* (631), *touch-and-go* (525), *low-key* (55), *dumbfounded* (523), *white-shoe* (17), *half-baked* (140), *gung-ho* (530) and *honest-to-god* (456). These expressions were translated into Finnish as *hämmästynyt* (528), *täpärämpi* (440), *hillittyyn* (57), *typertyneenä* (446), *yläluokkaisesta* (25), *puolittainen* (127), *innoissaan* (444) and *kunnon* (383). Most of the English adjective compounds therefore seem to have single-word equivalents in Finnish (the exception being *yläluokkainen*, which obviously consists of two words, but since its meaning is transparent, it does not qualify as an idiom). The Finnish language does have this sort of adjective compound idioms, too, but perhaps a little less than English has.

6.2.4 Figurative use of body parts

One last feature which was striking in the data was the plenitude of English idioms involving body parts. Various English idioms make figurative use of body parts such as 'hand', 'eye', 'heart' or 'foot', for instance. Examples of idioms involving the word 'eye' in this data were *never laid eyes on you* (261), *cut his eyes at Charles* (361), *in the public eye* (444) and *avoiding my eye* (238), which were translated into Finnish as *eikä hän satu näkemään sinua* (225), *katsovan Charlesiin* (307), *yleisen käsityksen mukaan* (373) and *välttelivät huolellisesti katsettani* (207). Idioms involving the word 'heart' included, for example *have the heart to* (257) and *at its heart* (273), which were translated as *en kertakaikkiaan viitsi* (222) and *pohjimmiltaan* (235) into Finnish. English idioms very often make use of body parts - again, Finnish does, too, but perhaps a little less so.

All in all, the strategy of translating an idiom with a non-idiomatic expression is appropriate when there is no corresponding target language idiom available. When the target language lacks an idiom of the same or similar meaning, the translator's second best option is to translate the expression with a "normal", non-idiomatic expression which conveys the meaning of the original expression. Obviously, a great deal of the vividness and style is lost in the translation process when source language idioms can only be translated with non-idiomatic target language expressions. However, these 'losses' of idioms are practically unavoidable, since the majority of idiomatic phrases in one language do not usually have corresponding idioms in another language. These losses of idioms are something that one is most likely to encounter in any given translation task.

Although the translator has not managed to replace all the English idioms in this data by corresponding idioms in Finnish, the choices that the translator has made have been successful nevertheless. The translator has, after all, been able to transfer the meaning of the English idioms to the Finnish language text. Although the expressions are not as vivid as the original English expressions, they nevertheless fulfil their most important task, which is transmitting the meaning of the phrases also to the target language text.

It is therefore quite inevitable that something is always lost in the translation process - the same evidently applies to idioms as well. One possible way of dealing with these 'lost' idioms is to add idioms elsewhere in the text, where there originally was a non-idiomatic expression. This compensative strategy will be dealt with later on in section 6.5. Next, however, I will take a look at the cases where an English idiom has been translated with a corresponding Finnish idiom.

6.3 Translating a source language idiom with a target language idiom

As it became evident in the theoretical part of this study, translating an idiom with an idiom is the strategy that scholars recommend the most for translating idioms, although they simultaneously admit that this is often not possible. For instance Ingo (1990: 246) stated that idioms should always be translated with a semantically and stylistically corresponding idiom in the target language, and Bassnet-McGuire (1980: 24) argued that the SL idiom should be replaced by a TL idiom that has the same meaning and function as the original idiom. In this study this recommendation could be followed rather extensively, seeing as 223 English pure or semi-idioms were translated with corresponding idioms in Finnish, thus representing 47% of the whole data. Translating an English idiom with a Finnish idiom which had the same meaning was the second popular translation strategy in this data.

Reasons for translating a source language idiom with a target language idiom are rather obvious: it is generally considered to be the best and the most effective strategy. If a source language idiom can be translated with a target language idiom which has the same meaning and function, it shall be used in the translation. I reckon this is important for two reasons. First, translating an idiom with an idiom allows the translator to imitate the style and spirit of the original text. Idioms give vividness and character to the text, which is important especially if the original text uses particularly vivid language and contains plenty of figurative expressions. By translating an idiom with an idiom, the unique stylistic features of the original text can be transmitted also to the translation. Secondly, the use of target language

idioms, rather than literally translated source language idioms, allows the text to speak meaningfully to the target language audience. It is therefore important that the translated text uses expressions which are meaningful and familiar to the target language reader.

As I studied the expressions in this category, my attention was drawn to the imagery used in English and Finnish idioms to express the same meaning. Perhaps rather surprisingly, a number of English and Finnish idioms seemed to contain the same figurative ideas. One could have assumed that American and Finnish cultures, as well as their languages, are rather different from each other and do not therefore share a great deal of similar figurative imagery. Of course simultaneously, some English idioms had Finnish equivalents which contained entirely different kind of figurative elements. I will now discuss the imagery used in the idioms and analyze their similarities and differences.

6.3.1 The same image

Although one could assume that English and Finnish idioms are rather different in terms of their character and imagery, the data in this study indicates that there are quite a few corresponding idioms in Finnish that are very similar to the English ones. In other words, Finnish idioms use surprisingly often the same kind of figurative ideas to express the same meaning. A number of English idioms were translated with a *precisely* or *partly* similar Finnish idiom. This is rather surprising insofar as idioms are usually language-specific expressions, which more often than not cannot be understood in another language as such. However, Finnish and English seem to contain a number of idioms which are the same or almost the same in both languages.

Examples of English language idioms which had been translated with the same kind of Finnish idioms are below.

he'll be eating out of your hand (24)	hän syö kädestäsi (30)
we were heading here towards	
treacherous waters (60)	lähestyimme vaarallisia vesiä (61)
suddenly all ears (310)	äkkiä pelkkänä korvana (266)
the salt of the earth (335)	maan suola (285)
rub salt in my wounds (121)	hieroa suolaa haavoihini (112)
cleared the air (256)	puhdisti ilmaa (222)
all hell would have	
broken loose (164)	helvetti oli päässyt irti (146)
at all costs (5)	hinnalla millä hyvänsä (15)
lays his cards on the table (38)	lyö kortit pöytään (43)

Examples above are more or less literal translations of each other, but they are still well-established and widely used idioms in both languages. Expressions such as *eat out of someone's hand*, *the salt of the earth*, *rub salt in one's wounds* and *clear the air* have virtually word-for-word equivalents in Finnish. In the theoretical considerations of this study, Nida and Taber (1969: 106) stated that idioms usually suffer a great deal of semantic adjustments in translation, since it is highly unlikely that the same type of peculiar expression will have the same meaning in another language. However, this study indicates that various English-language idioms do actually have the same kind of idiom with the same meaning also in Finnish.

6.3.2 Partly the same image

In addition to these literally translated idioms, the data in this study also includes various English language idioms which have been translated with Finnish language idioms which contain *partly* the same image or idea as the original English idiom. Examples of such idioms are:

on the warpath (101)	sotajalalla (95)
was out of her league (264)	paini väärässä sarjassa (228)
on the brink of taking wing (195)	oli saamassa ilmaa siipien alle (171)
keep my head (224)	pitää pääni kylmänä (195)

she was bad medicine (542) hän oli vaarallista lääkettä (454)
 you raked him over the coals (39) taisit grillata häntä (44)

The idioms above make use of extremely similar images to express the same idea, although they are not exactly literal equivalents of each other. The similarity between the English and the Finnish idioms in these examples is, however, rather striking. Each of the English idioms above has been translated with a Finnish idiom which contains at least one same element as the English one. These idioms may not mean the same literally, but are very close to doing so in any case.

As the examples above illustrate, some English language idioms are idioms in Finnish when they are extended or modified slightly. For instance the English idiom *take wing* becomes an idiom in Finnish when it is extended to 'get air under its wings', *saada ilmaa siipien alle*. Similarly, the English idioms *keep one's head* and *out of one's league*, have similar, slightly longer corresponding idioms in Finnish: *pitää päänsä kylmänä* ('keep one's head cold') and *painia väärässä sarjassa* ('wrestle in the wrong league'). All these examples share one element which is used figuratively ('wing' - 'siivet', 'head' - 'pää' and 'league' - 'sarja').

Furthermore, as one can see from the examples above, some English idioms are almost the same in Finnish when one element in them is replaced by a different element. For instance the English idiom *on the warpath* has a corresponding Finnish idiom *sotajalalla*, in which 'path' is replaced by 'jalalla': 'on warfoot'. Similarly, the English idiom *bad medicine* can be translated with an equivalent Finnish idiom by changing the adjective in front: '*bad*' *medicine* becomes '*dangerous*' *medicine* in Finnish, *vaarallista lääkettä*. Despite having different second elements, all these examples share one figurative element which is exactly the same in both languages: 'war' ('sota') and 'medicine' ('lääke'). *Rake someone over the coals* (meaning 'to give someone a hard time') has a very similar Finnish idiom *grillata jotakuta* ('grill someone'). The verbs in these idioms are different, but they both refer to the same action ('barbecuing' or 'grilling').

6.3.3 Different image

While various English idioms have equivalent Finnish idioms which contain the same or partly the same image, there are of course a number of idioms which are vastly different in the two languages. In other words, quite a few English language idioms have been translated with a Finnish language idiom which contains a completely different figurative image than the original idiom. Despite having entirely different literal meanings, these expressions have the same figurative meaning.

Below are some examples of English idioms and their Finnish translations which differ from each other in terms of their literal meaning:

lying on my feet (27)	kirkkain silmin valehtelemisessä (34)
piece of cake (362)	helppo nakki (307)
I got his drift (158)	ymmärsin yskän (141)
three sheets to the wind (57)	hyvässä laitamyötäisessä (59)
the last straw (209)	viimeinen pisara (184)
in debt to the eyebrows (150)	korvia myöten veloissa (135)
he's got a stick up his butt (463)	näyttää vähän seipään nielleeltä (389)
this is a hell of a note (627)	nyt on piru merrassa (525)
not for all the tea in China (266)	en kuuna päivänä (230)
got the show on the road (367)	otti ohjat käsiinsä (311)

Some of the English idioms above have Finnish equivalents that use entirely different kind of images to express the same meaning. For instance *lie on one's feet* (meaning 'obnoxious lying') has a completely different equivalent in Finnish: *valehdella kirkkain silmin*, i.e. 'lie with bright eyes'. *Piece of cake* has the equivalent Finnish idiom *helppo nakki* ('easy sausage') and *have a stick up one's butt* has a corresponding Finnish idiom *näyttää seipään nielleeltä* (whose literal meaning is 'look like s/he's swallowed a pole'). When someone is drunk out of their mind, the English expression *be three sheets to the wind* translates into Finnish as *olla hyvässä laitamyötäisessä* (whose extremely clumsy English translation would be something like 'be in good broad reach').

However, despite using different images, it must be noted that there are some minor similarities between the examples above. For instance the idioms *in debt to the eyebrows* (*korvia myöten veloissa*, i.e. 'in debt to the ears') and *lie on one's feet* (*valehdella kirkkain silmin*, 'lie with bright eyes') both make figurative use of body parts. Furthermore, one can spot the figurative use of food in both *piece of cake* and its translation *helppo nakki* ('easy sausage'), as well as similar imagery, 'stick' and 'pole' in the idioms *stick up his butt* and *näyttää seipään nielleeltä*. English and Finnish idioms can therefore use totally different imagery to express the same meaning, but even these idioms sometimes make use of images from the same subject area (food, body parts etc.).

6.3.4 Syntactic structure

Just like in the category of idioms translated with non-idiomatic expressions, the majority of idioms in this category were also verbal idioms. In the case of verbal idioms the syntactic form remained constant in all cases: that is, English verbal idioms were always translated with Finnish verbal idioms. Some examples of verbal idioms translated with verbal idioms are below.

got the hang of it (103)	päässeet siitä jyvälle (96)
provoke the raised eyebrow (61)	saa ihmiset edelleen kohottelemaan kulmiaan (63)
throw me for a loop (134)	lyövät minut aina ällikällä (122)
give him the old heave-ho (253)	heittää hänet laidan yli (219)
go behind my back (622)	toimisi selkäni takana (520)
hitting him hard for money (121)	lypsänyt Henryltä runsaasti rahaa (112)
stick together (142)	vetänyt yhtä köyttä (98)
cast in my lot (258)	heittäytynyt muiden kelkkaan (223)

The second largest group in this category was prepositional idioms. In contrast to the verbal idioms, which were always translated with verbal idioms also in Finnish, in the case of prepositional idioms the syntactic form almost always changed. Since the Finnish language does not have many prepositions, English prepositional idioms were usually translated with non-prepositional idioms in Finnish. Usually the Finnish equivalents were nominal idioms. Examples of prepositional idioms translated with nominal idioms are *at all costs* (5) - *hinnalla millä hyvänsä* (15), *by a trick of fate* (10) - *kohtalon oikusta* (19), *by the armload* (504) - *sylikaupalla* (423), *in two shakes* (67) - *tuossa tuokiossa* (67), *from time to time* (97) - *aika ajoin* (92), and *on top of each other* (266) - *toistenne niskassa* (229). Only one English prepositional idiom had been translated with a prepositional idiom in Finnish; *before long* (167) - *ennen pitkää* (148).

Although the vast majority of idioms in this category were verbal or prepositional idioms, a few nominal and adjective idioms were also found. English nominal idioms were usually translated with Finnish nominal idioms, e.g. *Indian summer* (51) - *intiaanikesä* (54), *lock, stock and barrel* (554) - *kimpsuineen kampsuineen* (464), *airhead* (334) - *älykääpiö* (284), *magpies* (181) - *suupaltit* (160), and *the salt of the earth* (335) - *maan suola* (285).

This category also included a few adjective idioms, which were always translated with Finnish adjective idioms. Examples include, for instance, *cold-blooded* (355) - *kylmäveristä* (301) and *back-clawing* (422) - *selkäpiitä karmivan* (356). The syntactic structure remained always constant in both nominal and adjective phrases.

6.3.5 Idiomatic similes

This category also included a number of idiomatic similes. In fact, the translator had managed to find a corresponding Finnish simile for every single English simile that I found in the data. Moreover, a number of English similes had word-for-word equivalents in Finnish. Examples are, for instance, *strong as an ox* (60) - *vahva kuin härkä* (62), *watches her like a hawk* (541) - *vahtii Camillaa kuin haukka* (454), *drink like a fish* (61) - *juo kuin kala* (62), *clean as a cat* (167) - *siisti kuin kissa* (148) and

trapped like rats (180) - *loukussa kuin rotat* (159). Some similes were not literal equivalents of each other, but very similar in both languages in any case. For instance the English similes *cheery as a lark* (213) and *was out like a light* (212) were translated with very similar Finnish similes *pirteänä kuin peipponen* (187) (i.e. 'cheery as a finch') and *sammuin kuin kynttilä* (186) (i.e. 'I passed out like a candle'). Idiomatic similes do not therefore seem to be a major translation problem, since an English simile often seems to have a corresponding Finnish simile with the same meaning.

6.3.6 Phrasal verbs

As it became clear in the previous section, most phrasal verbs in English translate into Finnish as non-idiomatic, single-word verbs. Altogether I found only 16 English phrasal verbs whose Finnish translation was an idiom. Examples of English phrasal verbs translated with Finnish idioms are below.

cleaned me out (226)	olivat suunnilleen putsanneet minut (198)
hush it up (532)	painaa kaiken villaisella (446)
pick me up (83)	iskeä minua (80)
farming their sons off on other people (228)	heittää poikansa toisten niskoille (199)
walk all over him (120)	hyppiä nenälleen (111)

One phrasal verb idiom (*she clammed up* (594)) had been translated with a Finnish simile (*hän sulkeutui heti kuin simpukka* (497)). Although the vast majority of English phrasal verbs can, thus, be only translated with non-idiomatic expressions in Finnish, for some phrasal verbs a corresponding Finnish idiom might be available. However, these cases were only occasional in this study.

6.4 Translating a source language idiom literally

As it became evident in the theoretical considerations of translation, literal translation is generally considered to be the least successful translation strategy. The same applies to idioms: scholars do not generally recommend translating idioms literally, because a word-for-word translation of an idiom is said to "ruin the beauty of the expression" (Nida 1964: 16), result in "nonsense" (Larson 1984: 116), and is therefore "rarely successful" (Ingo 1990: 246). In section 6.3.1 I already introduced some idioms which were literal translations, but which also were idioms in Finnish as such. This section, however, concentrates on literally translated idioms which are not idioms in Finnish.

In this particular data the literal translation strategy was, indeed, used extremely sparingly. The vast majority of English pure and semi-idioms in this data were translated with either corresponding Finnish idioms or non-idiomatic Finnish expressions (98% of the cases all in all). Translating an idiom literally was the least used strategy, since only 11 English idioms were translated literally into Finnish, thus representing only 2% of all cases. The reason for the unpopularity of this strategy is rather obvious: a literal translation of an idiom often results in nonsense in another language.

Despite the fact that scholars do not recommend using the literal translation strategy, some English idioms were translated literally into Finnish in this data. The data in this study partly proves the theoretical recommendations right: literally translated expressions can easily sound unnatural and clumsy. However, some of the examples in this data also indicate that a literal translation of an idiom *can* sometimes be a successful one. Below are some examples which I would consider successful literal translations, although the expressions are not idioms in Finnish as such. Some of the Finnish examples below are only semi-literal translations of the English ones, but close enough to the English idioms to be counted in this category.

he always knew the right nerve	
to touch (255)	tietää mitä hermoa koskea (221)
before you could spit (463)	ennen kuin sylkäistä ehti (389)
get to the bottom	
of anything (525)	päästä pohjaan asti (440)
had to play that one by ear (362)	täytyi pelata korvakuulolta (307)
have to dig pretty deep (389)	täytyisi kaivella aika syvältä (329)
rise above his station (247)	nousta asemansa yläpuolelle (214)
he was touching a nerve (217)	koskettavansa paljasta hermoa (190)

In my view, all these literal translations above do function in their overall contexts rather well. A Finnish reader should have no major difficulties whatsoever in understanding what expressions such as *tiesi mitä hermoa koskea*, *ennen kuin sylkäistä ehti* and *päästä pohjaan asti* mean. When used in their contexts, it is rather obvious that *touching a nerve* means that someone mentions a subject that makes somebody else feel angry or embarrassed, and *get to the bottom* refers to discovering the truth about something. The literal translations of these idioms sound perfectly fluent and authentic to a native Finnish speaker, as if they were normal, everyday idioms in Finnish as well. In fact, I suspect that an average Finnish reader would not have even noticed that these expressions are of foreign origin, if particular attention was not paid to these foreign elements.

The English idiom *before you could spit* has been translated literally into Finnish as *ennen kuin sylkäistä ehti*, even though a similar idiom would have been available in the Finnish language. For example *ennen kuin kissaa ehti sanoa* ('before you could say a cat') has the same meaning, and it could have been used instead of the literal translation. However, I think *ennen kuin sylkäistä ehti* is perfectly understandable to a Finnish reader although it is not idiom in Finnish as such. Perhaps the fact that Finnish has similar expressions in its vocabulary (i.e. the above-mentioned *ennen kuin kissaa ehti sanoa*), makes the expression rather easy to decode and an average Finnish reader should not find it difficult at all to understand the meaning of the expression. In fact, it could very well be an actual idiom in Finnish as well - so natural and smooth it sounds for a native Finnish speaker.

Pelata korvakuulolta is quite an interesting translation choice. The figurative meaning of the English expression *play by ear* basically means that someone has to deal with a situation as it develops, rather than having a plan to follow. The literal meaning of the phrase refers to playing a musical piece purely by listening to that piece. Finnish does have an expression which refers to the literal meaning of the phrase: *soittaa korvakuulolta*. *Pelata korvakuulolta* is therefore an expression which the translator has used figuratively to convey the figurative meaning of the phrase. On its own it does not really make much sense for a Finnish reader, but in the context in which it appears in the book, I personally think its meaning becomes understandable. Furthermore, if one is familiar with the expression *soittaa korvakuulolta*, the expression *pelata korvakuulolta* should be somewhat easy to decode. Again, the Finnish language does have some corresponding idioms of its own which could have been used instead of a literal translation, but have not been used for one reason or another. For instance the Finnish expression *mennä vaistojen varassa* ('go with one's instincts') would have conveyed virtually the same meaning.

It is probably safe to say that although general recommendations advise to avoid literal translations of idioms at all costs, some of the examples in this data demonstrate quite well that literal translations *can* sometimes work and maybe even add some extra spice to the text. I especially liked the Finnish translations *koskettaa hermoa* and *koskettaa paljasta hermoa*: these expressions are not idioms in Finnish, but the strong and effective imagery used in them conveys the meaning of the idioms rather efficiently for a Finnish reader. A literal translation of an idiom does not always inevitably result in complete nonsense, but can perhaps enrich the target language text and maybe even give rise to completely new target language idioms.

While some of the literal translations in this data have, thus, been successful, the literal translation strategy cannot obviously be applied to all cases. Not always does this strategy result in understandable and fluent expressions. This becomes evident when we take a look at some less successful literal translations. In the data I found two literally translated idioms which, in my view, do not really open up that easily for a Finnish reader, or sound more or less unnatural. These expressions are below.

a fuse would blow in my brain (9)	sulake paloi aivoissani (18)
for two cents (622)	kahdesta sentistä (521)

A fuse would blow in my brain is an extended idiom of the conventional idiom *blow a fuse*, which refers to getting angry. Its literal Finnish translation *sulake paloi aivoissani* could perhaps be understandable to a Finnish reader if its contextualization was clear enough. However, in this particular context its meaning was rather unclear, and I would assume that an average Finnish reader might find it difficult to understand what kind of emotions this expression exactly refers to. I suspect that if one is not familiar with the original expression from which it was translated, it might be difficult to decode this expression.

Furthermore, the Finnish language does actually have idioms of its own which refer to 'getting angry'. For instance idioms such as *polttaa hihansa* or *polttaa päreensä* could have been used instead of the literally translated *sulake paloi aivoissani*, but the translator has for some reason decided not to use these "truly Finnish" expressions. The reason for using a literally translated English idiom instead of a proper Finnish idiom might be that the translator has wanted to convey some stylistic bits and pieces of the original text to the translation.

The other literally translated example, *for two cents*, had been translated into Finnish as *kahdesta sentistä*. Again, the resulting translation on its own does not make much sense to a Finnish reader, unless s/he is familiar with the original English expression. In its context, which was "*Kyllä hän sen tekisi*", *hän sanoi. "Kahdesta sentistä."* the meaning does, at least to some extent, open up for a Finnish reader. However, even if the meaning of the expression *kahdesta sentistä* thus becomes somewhat intelligible for the Finnish audience in its context, I would argue that this expression nevertheless sounds rather 'un-Finnish'. It has a certain extremely American ring to it, and it is not an expression I would assume a native Finnish speaker to use. Furthermore, the translation choice is somewhat strange also because of the fact that at the time of the translation (in 1993), we did not have cents in our currency. This historical fact makes the word choice even more peculiar, and it probably sounded

even more 'un-Finnish' and unnatural at the time the translation was published. I could not come up with an equivalent Finnish idiom, but expressions such as *tuosta vain* or *noin vain* could have been used instead of the literally translated idiom.

All in all, the number of literally translated idioms was extremely low, but those expressions which had been translated literally, were mostly successful ones. It can therefore be concluded that literal translations can work in some cases and in certain contexts, although this strategy should of course be used rather sparingly and with careful consideration. Obviously, it is not a strategy that could ever be applied more extensively, but should be used only selectively.

Translation theorists do make an important point by pointing out the problems of the literal translation strategy, which have to do with issues of intelligibility and naturalness of the translation. A book-length translation could obviously never be successful if it relied too much on the literal translation strategy. However, this is not to say that a literal translation is automatically a failed translation option and the resulting translation is inevitably bad. Things are never as black and white as various theoretical recommendations about translation indicate.

I think the translation of this book is a good example of the fact that if the literal translation strategy is applied extremely selectively, the resulting expressions can be exciting, lively and interesting. One must obviously be immensely careful with using this strategy, but a few foreign elements in a book-length translation are hardly enough to make the text sound unnatural on a more general level. A few 'odd' or un-Finnish idioms here and there in the text hardly disrupt the flow of the text, either. In fact, the vast majority of the literally translated idioms in this data do not even really stand out from the text - rather, they have blended so smoothly in the natural flow of the text that it would be somewhat difficult to even spot them if one was not particularly looking for these foreign elements.

Thus, when applied only occasionally, the literal translation strategy can help the translated text come alive and perhaps convey some of the vividness and style of the original text to the translated text. Occasional 'foreign' elements do not automatically

alienate the target language reader from the text, but can at times function as a stylistic device.

6.5 Translating a non-idiomatic expression with a target language idiom

As stated in section 6.2, all in all 241 pure or semi-idioms collected from the book *The Secret History* could not be translated as idioms into its Finnish translation *Jumalat juhliivat öisin*. Idioms indeed seem to be somewhat problematic in terms of their translatability. The fact that all source language idioms do not translate into the target language as idioms is a phenomenon that translators are likely to encounter in any given translation task. Since each language has its unique ways of using figurative language and imagery, it is hardly surprising that a large number of figurative expressions in one language do not exist in another language. This study, too, indicates that an average-length novel loses a number of idioms in the process of translating it from one language into another.

Since idioms are such a prominent part of the language, and therefore also strongly present in works of fiction, it is definitely worth considering how these inevitable idiomatic losses should be dealt with. If a source language text, then, uses particular vivid language and contains a great deal of figurative expressions, it is important to deliberate what could be done to the text translation-wise. Idioms and other figurative expressions have a significant role in making the text lively and vivacious, which is why one should consider different means to deal with these problems.

One possible strategy to deal with these stylistic losses is to add target language idioms elsewhere in the text. In the theoretical part of this study for instance Nida and Taber (1969) and Vehmas-Lehto (2002) identified this 'compensative' strategy as one possible means by which different kinds of translational losses can be compensated for at least to some extent. Hence, even if in some places a source language idiom cannot be translated into the target language as an idiom, this loss of an idiom can be compensated elsewhere in the text. This is exactly what the translator of *Jumalat juhliivat öisin* has occasionally done. Since all the English

idioms in the book could not be replaced by equivalent Finnish idioms, the translator has at times tried to make up for the lost idioms by adding target language idioms to places where there originally was a non-idiom.

As it became evident in the theoretical part of this study, few translation scholars even acknowledge the possibility of the compensative strategy in the first place. However, since this strategy has an important compensative function, I consider it necessary to pay attention to this strategy as well. Furthermore, various other studies devoted to the translation of idioms have systematically ignored this strategy.

All in all I found 26 Finnish language idioms in the data which were non-idioms in the original, English version of the book. The strategy has not therefore been used that extensively or systematically, but rather on a "here and there" basis. This translation strategy has nevertheless an important stylistic function, which is to maintain the overall style and spirit of the original text. By adding target language idioms to places where there originally was a non-idiom in the source language context, at least some of the stylistic peculiarities of the original text can be conveyed also to the target language text.

The expressions in this category were mostly verbal and adjective or adverbial phrases, which had been translated into Finnish as idioms. Below are some examples in which the original expression is a non-idiomatic verbal construction, whereas its Finnish translation is an idiom.

talked too much (552)	puhunut sivu suuni (462)
pestered the rest of us (305)	roikkuneen meidän kimpussa (262)
dispatched (323)	pani jokin aika sitten päiviltä (275)
had scooped them all (416)	löi muut laudalta (351)
I was only joking (163)	laskin leikkiä (145)
chucking around a	
couple of jokes (179)	heitetään huulta (158)

The English-language verbs above have been translated with slightly longer verbal idioms in Finnish. For instance the English verbs *pester* ('bother'), *dispatch* ('kill') and *scoop* ('publish a story before other newspapers or television companies') might be somewhat unordinary word choices, but they do not qualify as idioms because of their self-explanatory meanings, one-wordness and the fact that dictionaries do not list them as idioms, either. However, their Finnish translations *roikkua jonkun kimpussa*, *panna päiviltä* and *lyödä laudalta* are highly idiomatic, because they are conventionalized expressions whose figurative meanings are very different from the literal meanings of the expressions. Furthermore, English verbal phrases such as *chuck around a couple of jokes* and *talk too much* do not meet the criteria of semantic opacity, either. Rather, their meanings are entirely transparent and obvious, whereas their Finnish translations *heittää huulta* and *puhua sivu suun* have idiomatic quality and are much harder to understand if taken literally.

Some English adjective or adverbial phrases had also been translated into Finnish as idioms. Examples are below.

casually (591)	muitta mutkitta (495)
smoked constantly (482)	poltti ketjussa (405)
spread rapidly (499)	tieto kiiri kuin kulovalkea (418)
infallible (506)	idioottivarma (425)
perfectly casual (590)	muina miehinä (493)
early (159)	ennen aikojaan (142)

The word 'casual' appears in two examples in this category, in the adverbial expression *casually* and the adjective expression *perfectly casual*. The fact that Finnish does not really have a smooth and natural equivalent for the word 'casual' has forced the translator to think of possible expressions which could convey a similar meaning. She has therefore come up with the idiomatic expressions *muitta mutkitta* and *muina miehinä*. Both expressions are unlikely to be found in any other language. In the English expression *smoke constantly* the latter part of the phrase has been replaced by a figurative element in its Finnish translation: *polttaa ketjussa*, i.e.

'smoke in chain'. For the expression *remark which [...] spread rapidly*, on the other hand, the translator has found a Finnish simile *tieto kiiri kuin kulovalkea*.

This particular book uses particularly vivid and imaginative language and is full of different kinds of figurative expressions, such as idioms, metaphors and similes. These lively expressions have an important role in making the text as beautiful and vivid as it is. Since the text is so heavily filled with figurative expressions, preserving the figurativeness and beauty of the language has definitely not been an easy task for the translator - while simultaneously it has probably been one of the most significant tasks in this translation. With the help of the compensative strategy at least some of the idiomatic and stylistic losses have been compensated for elsewhere in the text. In the end, it does not really make much difference where in the text the idioms and other figurative expressions are, if the goal is to preserve the general stylistic rhythm of the original text. If this can be achieved by adding similar figurative elements to places where there originally were not any, I see no reason why this strategy should not be used.

As a matter of fact, the compensative strategy could have been used even more extensively in the translation of this particular book. Since the trademark of Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* is, indeed, the highly figurative and lively use of language, the compensative strategy could easily have been applied slightly more systematically. Whereas the translator has been able to translate 223 pure or semi-idioms into the target text as idioms, and compensate for all in all 26 'lost' idioms, the fact remains that a total of 241 idioms could not be translated into the target text as idioms. If the most important task of the translator is to convey the overall linguistic style of the original text, rather than merely replace individual source language elements by corresponding target language elements, the compensative strategy could by no means be applied on a wider and more systematic basis.

The problem of the compensative strategy is, of course, the question of faithfulness to the original text. The eternal question in translation theory seems to be how far the translator is allowed to change and modify the original text. Some could criticize a translator who arbitrarily adds figurative expressions to places where there originally

were not any, for somehow violating his or her responsibility to the original author and text. However, I would argue that if this strategy is applied carefully, rather than entirely arbitrarily, there should not be major concerns about the translator taking 'too many liberties' - after all, the translator's main responsibility is to the text as a whole, rather than its individual words and their translation choices. If the compensative strategy is, thus, an important device in preserving the overall stylistic rhythm of the text, I think the application of this strategy is completely justified.

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine translation strategies of idioms. The research object was Donna Tartt's novel *The Secret History*, from which I collected all the English idioms that I could find. After that I gathered their Finnish translations from the Finnish version of the book, *Jumalat juhliivat öisin*. The English idioms were classified into actual idioms (i.e. semi-idioms and pure idioms) and phrasal verbs, after which I examined their translation strategies. Furthermore, I examined the Finnish translation of the book carefully in order to find Finnish idioms in places where there was a non-idiom in the original, English version of the book.

The translator appeared to have used three different strategies for translating idioms: translating an idiom with a non-idiom, translating an idiom with an idiom and translating an idiom literally. For both actual idioms and phrasal verbs the most frequently used translation strategy was translating an idiom with a "normal", non-idiomatic expression. The second most popular strategy was to translate a source language idiom with a corresponding target language idiom. The least used strategy for both pure and semi-idioms and phrasal verbs was the literal translation strategy.

In the theoretical part of this study I examined theoretical considerations of both translation and idioms. Translation, its aims and ideals were described, as defined by different scholars. Some of the most central concepts in translation theory were also introduced (e.g. the concepts of meaning and equivalence and the theory of skopos), and their relevance to this study was explicated. Translation strategies and translation of prose fiction were also discussed, since this study examined translation strategies in a prose fiction novel.

The concept of idiomaticity was also discussed in detail. Different definitions and characteristics of an idiom were introduced, and different types of classifications for idioms were also presented. Finally, my own definition of an idiom was provided, according to which I selected the data for this study. Last but not least, the translation of idioms was discussed on a general level. The theoretical recommendations for translating idioms were discussed in relation to the empirical results of this study.

The results of this study are partially in accordance with theoretical considerations concerning the translation of idioms. Theoretical recommendations for translating idioms indicated that most frequently target language idioms are shifted to source language non-idioms in the translation process. Indeed, the strategy in which source language idioms are translated with target language non-idioms appeared to be the most popular strategy in this study, too. 51% of English pure and semi-idioms were shifted to Finnish non-idioms in this study.

However, one must simultaneously acknowledge that the percentage of idioms translated with idioms was also rather high: 47% of English pure or semi-idioms could be translated with corresponding idioms in Finnish. The figure is by no means bad, especially when considering the fact that in the theoretical part of this study various scholars were sceptical about the capability of idioms in one language to translate as idioms into another language. Preservation of the idiomaticity in the translation process may be somewhat problematic, but it appears not to be *as* problematic and difficult as various translation scholars indicate.

As was pointed out in the theoretical part of this study, various translation scholars also strictly prohibited the use of the literal translation strategy. Most scholars consider it an absolutely unacceptable strategy which destroys the meaning of the original expressions and results in complete nonsense in the target language. However, the data in this study indicated that the literal translation strategy can actually work in some cases and in some contexts. Some of the literally translated idioms in this study were entirely understandable to a target language reader, which implies that it is by no means an automatically failed strategy.

There were rather significant differences between the translation strategies for phrasal verbs and actual idioms in terms of how frequently the different strategies were applied. While for pure and semi-idioms a corresponding Finnish idiom had been found in 47% of all cases, for phrasal verbs the figure was respectively 11%. The notable majority of phrasal verbs could therefore be translated only as "normal", non-idiomatic verbs into Finnish. This is due to the rather major differences between

the languages in question, English and Finnish. While in the English language the abundance of phrasal verbs is remarkable, in Finnish they are rather marginal. This significant difference between the two languages was also the reason for my decision to examine the translation strategies separately for phrasal verbs and actual idioms.

The results of this study indicate that while idioms are often considered difficult to translate, they do not seem to represent a major translation problem in terms of translatability. After all, the translator has managed to translate all the idioms in one way or another - none of the idioms had, in fact, been left untranslated. On the basis of this study, idioms cannot really be considered as something overly problematic to translate, since their meanings can always be transmitted to the target language by some means.

The problem in the translation of idioms is therefore not really their alleged untranslatability - rather, the actual problem lies in the fact that their idiomatic quality cannot always be transmitted to the target language text. In the case of pure and semi-idioms 51% of the expressions could not be translated as idioms into Finnish in this study. Some of these idiomatic losses had been compensated for elsewhere in the text, since the translator had replaced altogether 26 English-language non-idioms by Finnish idioms. The idiomatic balance between the original text and the translated text therefore remained slightly uneven, but this is something that is likely to occur in any book-length translation. The translator had nevertheless done a good job by coming up with corresponding Finnish idioms in 47% of the cases all in all, and transmitting the correct meaning of also those idioms which could not be translated into Finnish as idioms. The most important task of translation - which is to convey the meaning of the original expressions - had therefore been fulfilled.

The weakness of this study lies in the fact that since idioms are such a prominent, normal part of our everyday language use, some of the idioms in the book have most likely been left unnoticed. Although I carefully read the books twice, it is probable that I have not noticed all the idioms in the books, and the data does not therefore include all the idioms the books may have possibly contained. The task of collecting

the idioms from the books was rather troublesome to begin with, since the books were so full of different kinds of figurative expressions - rather often expressions which looked like idioms on the face of it, turned out to be just figurative expressions which the author had made up. It was therefore somewhat challenging to be able to spot true idioms from a text that uses extremely figurative and rich language.

However, since the data of this study is relatively massive as it is, the possible 'unnoticed' idioms would probably not have affected the research results anyway. I believe that the data is large enough as it is now, which is why it is unlikely that a greater number of idioms would have brought any new information to the study or changed the research results in any way. It is therefore safe to say that this study gives a realistic and perhaps even a somewhat representative picture of the translation of idioms from English to Finnish.

Another possible weakness of this study might be the fact that the book and its translation are not exactly recent publications. Both were published in the beginning of the 1990s, which means that they were written almost two decades ago. One can always question how up-to-date the language of the books is and whether they can be considered to represent contemporary language at its best. However, I would argue that at least for a language student such as myself, the language in both books mostly seemed up-to-date and current. The idiomatic expressions which were collected from the books are for the most part common and well-established idioms, which a present-day reader also uses and is familiar with. The lifespan of well-established and conventionalized idioms can easily be infinite, which is why the expressions in this book hardly stand out as something 'outdated' or 'old-fashioned' for a modern-day reader.

Because of the vastness and diversity of the idiomatic expressions in this data, I believe the results of this study are reliable and valid. The number of the collected examples was rather high, which increases the reliability of the results. A similar study done on some other prose fiction novel is likely to produce similar, although certainly not identical, results. This was, of course, a case study on one translated novel only.

In other studies concerning the translation of idioms (such as Keränen 2006 and Kostamo 1995), the results have been somewhat similar: in both of these studies the most frequently used translation strategy has been translating a source language idiom with a target language non-idiom. However, in these two studies the number of source language idioms translated with target language idioms was considerably lower than in the present study.

Similar studies on the translation strategies of idioms have therefore been carried out earlier, but what makes this study stand out from other related studies, is the fact that I have also included the compensative strategy in the analysis. Other studies on the translation strategies of idioms have systematically ignored the compensative strategy, in which target language idioms are added to places where there originally was a non-idiom in the source language context. This study hopefully demonstrates the potential of this strategy and increases awareness of the compensative strategy.

As for further studies on translating idioms, I think it would be immensely interesting to study the translation of idioms the other way around: how do Finnish idioms translate into English? This study gives some idea of how well English idioms translate into Finnish and how often the idiomaticity of the expressions can be preserved, but the results could be somewhat different if the study was carried out on a Finnish language novel and its English translation. This study could therefore be extended by also examining the phenomenon the other way around.

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