

A Qualitative Analysis of Language and Culture Barriers Confronting Student Translators

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Abstract

Translators' primary responsibility is to faithfully convey the original message from the source text into the target language. This study's initial observation revealed that many beginning translator students frequently represent texts word for word without first reading them. Therefore, insufficient translation procedures can lead to translation errors in student work. This study aims to analyze translation issues in academic essays written by students. The data for this study were gathered using the qualitative approach. Mathieu's (2003) theory of translation concerns analyzing the linguistic and non-linguistic challenges that can be identified in the translations of students' essays. The results reviewed that translation issues involved numerous linguistic aspects, such as grammar, vocabulary, rhetoric, and pragmatics. Moreover, culture as well.

Keywords: academic articles, linguistic and non-linguistic challenges, Mathieu's theory, translating culture, translation issues

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Introduction

Professional translators and students who are majoring in areas related to translation would do well to learn how to translate. Malkjaer (2011) declares that the job of a translator is to try to get the essence of a text from one language to another. When asked if the translated work should be the same as the original, both researchers said no, but the original's goal should be shared in the translated work. Waldorf (2013, pp. 45-58) states that translation is "the process of transferring the meaning of a particular text from one language to the close equivalent of the target language." Based on what Malkjaer and Waldorf have said, translation is moving ideas from one language (the source language) to another (the target language). Thus, translators move ideas without changing the source text's purposes. The purpose of the text in the translating process means that the target text should have the same meaning as the source text. Also, the interpreters need to know that all they do is say what was said in the source language text in another language. They are not making any changes to the ideas in the main text. Translators should know more about the original text before putting it into the target language. Risku (2016) conducted a study that showed that the majority of clients of translators are dissatisfied with the work that translators produce. That is due to the purpose or intention of the source text being only sometimes apparent in the text written in the target language. As a result, translators lose credibility when their finished work fails to meet the client's standards. Risku (2016) conveys that translators and clients must keep discussing what to expect from the translation process to ensure the translators' work is correct and the client is satisfied with the result.

There have been many studies on translation, the most prominent of which are the studies on the difficulties associated with translation. In the year 2014, Bharathi carried out a study with the working title "Theory and issues in translation." His research endeavored to analyze the translation issues manifesting in *Tell a thousand lies* and *the Sea of Innocence*. In this particular investigation, the qualitative approach was utilized. His research findings indicated that, based on the two books subjected to the investigation, the cultural issues appeared to be the ones that arose most frequently among the problems discovered. In addition, both novels translated into Urdu were initially written in English. Since English was chosen as the source language, one of India's many languages, Urdu, was chosen as the target language. However, since many cultural terms in English were not translated, Shama Bharathi concluded that most English words were not translated accurately into Indian. That is why he stressed how important it is for translators to have a firm grasp of both languages (the "source" and "target") involved.

This study aims to benefit students, teachers, and scholars by analyzing student-written academic articles that contain translation errors. As a result, students can gain a deeper understanding of the factors at play in translation difficulties by reading the findings and discussion sections. Teachers who spend much time instructing translation will find this study's strategy for reducing translation errors in academic articles, particularly helpful. Future studies of translation will benefit from this investigation as well. Therefore, this research offers additional information as needed.

This study examined English department translators' challenges in translating scholarly articles using students from the 2015 translation class. The study also examined the translations of translation students. It applies Mathieu's (2003) translation theory to an argumentative and comparing and contrasting article's translations. Few studies like this one focused on specific problems, such as translating an English novel into an Indian language, cross-cultural translation,

meaning lost in translation articles, or the difficulty and challenges of translating historical text. Therefore, investigate the academic essay's translation difficulties.

Translation majors who have completed all required linguistics courses such as Introduction to Linguistics, Phonetics and Phonology, Morphology, English Syntax, Sociolinguistics, Semantics, and Pragmatics, and Psycholinguistics should be able to translate a text from the Source Language (SL) to the Target Language (TL) by the third semester. In addition, practically every course taught by faculty in the translation department requires students to write an academic essay. Thus, this study sought to delve further into students' capacity to translate academic essays and study the general issues in academic essay translation based on the abovementioned trends among translation department students.

This study is conducted for the sake of helping students succeed despite difficulties, linguistic or otherwise, as well as instructors and researchers, via the analysis of student-written academic articles with erroneous translations.

Literature Review

Translation Problems

It was previously mentioned that translation transfers concepts from the source to the target language. This does not involve modifying the content of the text or the purposes for which it was written. In addition, translation is similar to any other English skill, primarily focusing on resolving issues arising from the translation process. One example is when the product of a translation cannot be understood in the same manner as the source text.

In addition, Hertz (2009) conducted research suggesting that translators of academic essays or transcripts should consult their clients' reference materials to understand the academic terminologies and educational jargon typically used in their particular research fields. For instance, a customer wishing to have their engineering document translated should provide the translators with at least references, such as lists of engineering terms from specific dictionaries or a link to a website that discusses the meaning of engineering terms. A client requesting an engineering document's translation must provide terms commonly employed in the engineering industry. Using this method will yield the most accurate translation feasible. This investigation will focus on the academic article translations produced by fifth-semester translation department students who have taken translation courses. That will be accomplished by analyzing the issues these students have caused, a crucial component of the study.

Similarly, Rosa, R. N.'s study (2021) looks at the challenges and answers that student translators of historical narratives face when dealing with equivalence. Ten student translators were involved in this descriptive study, and they converted an English historical narrative into Bahasa Indonesia. Translog captured the student translators' work. Students translating from English into Bahasa Indonesia employed six tactics (naturalization, borrowing, description, deletion, addition, and generalization) to address five equivalence problems while working on a historical recount text. Data suggests that problems arose due to students' need for more cultural knowledge of the original language. This research looks at the difficulties Arabic-to-English translation students face working on expository and narrative articles.

Moreover, Bakhtiyarova, Y. M. (2022) emphasizes that The translation process is both complex and fascinating. Because this process necessitates interaction between the two peoples and their respective language speakers, each nation has its customs and beliefs. This complicates the translation process and necessitates exceptional translation skills. This study thus emphasizes

the significance of translators' competence in both languages and cultures and the difficulties that arise when they lack such competence for the sake of the target text and its intended readers.

According to Mathieu (2003), there are five primary translation issues. These are lexical-semantic, grammatical, rhetorical, pragmatic, and cultural issues.

Poor Word Selection

Translators' lexical decisions have an impact on the intended meaning of a text, as revealed by Mathieu (2003). In addition, the meaning of any given word in any given dictionary will be crystal clear when applied to a given context. A word can have thousands of meanings, but if expressed in a sentence, it can be comprehended. That is why it is essential to read the book in its entirety to grasp its significance fully. Word choice problems can also be fixed by looking up each word in the appropriate dictionary, translating any collocations or idioms that stand on their own, and learning which words are synonyms or antonyms for each. As a result, the translated text will be more interesting to read. For example, in the Arabic language primarily, learners might say "صنعت المحكمة قرارها النهائي," which means "The court made its last decision," It should be translated as "أصدرت المحكمة قرارها النهائي." A further consideration is that a student who translates the word above needs a complete command of the target language's nuances.

Syntactic Problems

There are several grammatical differences between Arabic and English. One of these problems is the use of articles. There are two articles in English, "a/an" for singular nouns and "the" for both singular and plural nouns. There are no articles in Arabic, and the noun is placed in the sentence without any article. For example, the English sentence "I saw a car" would be translated into Arabic as "رأيت سيارة" (ra'aytusayyara) without the use of the article "a."

In her study, Linguist Al-Deen (2014) highlighted the difficulty that Arabic speakers face when learning English articles. She notes that "Arabic lacks articles, which makes it difficult for Arabic speakers to understand the concept of articles in English" (p. 43). She also mentions that Arabic speakers tend to overuse or omit articles in English, which can affect their comprehension and fluency. Therefore, the absence of articles in Arabic and the use of articles in English can pose a significant grammatical challenge for Arabic speakers when learning English, and language educators must address this issue and provide appropriate guidance and instruction to help learners overcome this obstacle. In Arabic, the adjective usually comes after the noun it modifies, while in English, the adjective comes before the noun.

For example, the Arabic phrase "سيارة حمراء" (sayarahamraa) translates to "red car" in English. Here, the adjective "حمراء" (hamraa) comes after the noun "سيارة" (sayara). In English, we would say "red car," with the adjective "red" coming before the noun "car." This difference in word order can sometimes confuse Arabic speakers learning English and vice versa for English speakers learning Arabic.

Rhetorical Problems

Rhetorical problems in translation refer to difficulties in conveying the intended rhetorical effect of the source text in the target language. Rhetoric refers to the use of language to persuade or influence an audience, and this can be challenging to translate when the rhetorical strategies used in the source text need to have direct equivalents in the target language. An example of a

rhetorical problem in Translation between Arabic and English is using repetition in Arabic. Arabic has a long tradition of using repetition for emphasis and rhetorical effect, such as repeating the same word or phrase several times within a sentence or passage. However, this type of repetition in English can often sound redundant or awkward. For example, the Arabic phrase " وَعَدْتُكَ وَعَدًّا وَفَرَّطْتُهُ " (wa'adtukawa'danfarrattuhu) translates to "I made you a promise, but I broke it" in English. The repetition of the verb "wa'adtuka" (I made you a promise) and the verb form "farrattuhu" (I broke it) is a rhetorical device used for emphasis in Arabic. However, this repetition would sound redundant and unnatural in English, and a translator would need to find a way to convey the rhetorical effect without using the same level of repetition as in the source.

Pragmatic Problems

Pragmatic problems in translation occur when the translator cannot accurately convey the intended meaning of the source text due to cultural differences or a lack of understanding of the context. This can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the text, leading to confusion or even offense. Pragmatic problems can also arise when the translator cannot accurately convey the tone or register of the source text, which can lead to a loss of nuance or subtlety in the translation.

Cultural Problems

According to Newmark (1988, p. 82), "cultural issues in the translation are of paramount importance since the translator must be aware of the cultural context of the source language and the target language to accurately convey the intended meaning of the text." Moreover, this is similar to what Baker 1992 has discussed in this regard.

Translation is not merely replacing words from one language into another. Cultural issues play a crucial role in translation, as the meaning of words and phrases is often tied to the cultural context in which they are used. Therefore, failure to consider cultural issues in translation can lead to severe problems, such as misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and even offense.

Some cultural issues that may arise in translation include:

- **Idioms and expressions:** Every language has its own idioms and expressions that convey specific meanings within their cultural context. When translating idiomatic expressions literally, the meaning can be lost or distorted. For example, the Arabic expression " حط عليها الرمل " literally means "put sand on it," but in the cultural context, it means "forget about it" or "let it go."
- **Taboo words and concepts:** Different cultures have different taboos and sensitivities around certain words and concepts. For example, the Arabic word "haram" means "forbidden" or "prohibited" in a religious context, but it is also used colloquially to refer to something socially unacceptable. In English, however, the word "haram" has a strong religious connotation, and using it in a non-religious context could be offensive to some people.
- **Tone and style:** The tone and style of language can also vary across cultures. For example, Arabic uses more flowery language and elaborate expressions, whereas English is more straightforward. Translating a text from Arabic to English while maintaining the same style can lead to the text being perceived as overly verbose or complicated.
- **Gender and honorifics:** In Arabic, gender plays a significant role in language, with different

words and forms of address used for males and females. Honorifics are also an essential part of the Arabic language and culture, with specific titles used to show respect and deference to elders and authority figures. Translating from Arabic to English without taking gender and honorifics into consideration can lead to confusion and offense.

In conclusion, cultural issues are an essential factor to consider in translation, as they can significantly affect the accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text.

Methods

This qualitative study examined the impact of Translation Class 2021 on academic article translations. This inquiry sought solutions to the highlighted issues. Qualitative research has distinct advantages, according to Creswell (2014). Qualitative research explores how people interpret their natural experiences, behaviors, and relationships. It entails flexible and iterative data collection and analysis utilizing various methods to capture people's rich and nuanced experiences. Qualitative research uses subjective data interpretation to investigate complicated phenomena and produce theories and hypotheses for further study.

Gambier and van Doorslaer (2016) examine translation studies' intersections with anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and cultural studies. The book discusses translation study subjects such as intercultural communication, ethics, technology, and power. Empirical translation research and the necessity for interdisciplinary methods to understand translation processes and consequences are also addressed in the book. The book stresses interdisciplinary collaboration to advance translation studies.

According to Saldanha (2014), a translation study seeks to understand translators' or interpreters' behavior, skill, competency, and cognitive process when translating a text from the source language to the target language. Chesterman (2002) suggests utilizing the qualitative method to assess the many translation errors in the target text after translation. This study's qualitative findings show students' academic article translation issues. Jordan's Irbid National University's Translation Department conducted the study. Translation students were chosen because this study investigated problems with English-Arabic Translation. Thus, translation difficulties were analyzed using participants' translated texts.

Participants

Ten students of Translation Class 2021 from Irbid National University participated in this study. They were suitable for the study due to their English-Arabic translation experience. Undergrad translation students participated. They examined academic article translation issues because they were familiar with academic writing conventions and had translation training courses. Analyzing participants' translated texts revealed this context's translation issues. They helped students comprehend academic article translation challenges.

Research Instruments

The research examined Translation Class 2021's effects on academic article translation using a qualitative method and several research tools. Translation students at Irbid National University were to learn about their experiences, perspectives, and issues. The researcher identified translation issues by analyzing participants' translated texts. To understand academic text translation requirements, academic articles were analyzed by professional translators adopting Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) tool. The study used various research tools to understand

translating student issues and propose solutions.

Research Procedures

This qualitative study at Irbid National University in Jordan examined Translation Class 2021 difficulties and their effects on academic article translation. Participants were translation students from the university's Translation department. The study investigated translation issues between English and Arabic. Students struggled to translate academic publications, according to qualitative findings. The research steps were Participant selection, data collection from translated texts, qualitative data analysis, and problem-solving. Translation studies benefit from the research's insights into the translation process and the emphasis on multidisciplinary collaboration.

Findings

In this study, the participants were primarily translation students who were requested to translate two types of academic essays from Arabic to English. These essays were expository and narrative. There were five issues with the translations of the ten tests, including expository and narrative essays that the ten participants translated: word choice issues, grammatical, rhetorical, pragmatic, and cultural issues.

Five participants in this study translated a four-paragraph, eighteen-sentence expository article and a three-paragraph, fifteen-sentence narrative article. In addition, each participant in this study was named EX (Expository article) or NA (Narrative article), such as Participant EX1 and NA1 for Participant One.

In the interviews, the participants discussed their translation experience by providing specific examples of translation problems encountered during the translation process and speculations about possible causes for and solutions to such problems. One participant, for instance, attributed the difficulty of the literal translation of metaphors and other rhetorical aspects seen in the narrative essay to linguistic and cultural disparities.

Furthermore, the difficulty in both texts was analyzed and categorized according to the types of problems that had been modified using Mathieu's (2003) theories of translation difficulties. Here is a table with all the relevant info.

According to the data in Appendix A, most students need help with the linguistic aspects of translating expository and narrative essays. Furthermore, English grammar rules and a semantic problem in a few lexical choices that participants made due to their failure to translate certain rhetorical words and phrases in Arabic Text (SL), including expository and narrative articles, were the most frequently found linguistics issues in the participants' translated works. In addition to the linguistics-related challenges, a rhetorical issue was at the root of the lexical-choice and pragmatic difficulties. A few cultural issues were also uncovered. Mathieu (2003) identified five potential challenges with translation; our investigation identified all five.

Data Analysis

The table above shows that most problems students have when translating academic essays (Expository and Narrative) involve language. Also, most of the linguistic problems found in the translated works of the participants were related to English grammar rules and the meaning of certain words. The participants needed help translating diverse rhetorical words and phrases from the ST in expository and narrative articles. In addition to the linguistics problem, two other issues

were found that had nothing to do with language. These were rhetorical problems, causing problems with word selection, pragmatics, and cultural problems. So, this study found problems with five of the five translation problems that Mathieu (2003) had. After putting the above problems into groups using the table, the researchers looked at the above data. As seen in the table above, the discussion below will discuss all the problems found in the translated English Texts (TTs), including word selection, syntactic, rhetorical, pragmatic, and cultural problems. Also, the problems found will be explained by comparing the ST and the TT.

Poor Word Selection

Word selection problems can occur when translating a text from Arabic into English, as the two languages have different vocabularies and nuances in meaning. Here are some examples that have been found in the participants' translations:

First example,

Original Arabic sentence: ممّا يتسبّب في ضعف شهية الأكل.

Literal translation: which causes poor appetite.

The use of "poor appetite" might not be the best translation for "ضعف شهية الأكل". The Arabic phrase is more accurately translated to "loss of appetite." "Poor appetite" could imply that someone has a generally weak appetite. In contrast, "loss of appetite" means a decreased desire to eat due to smoking.

Second example,

Original Arabic sentence: و ظهور "البلغم" ثم ضيق التنفس بعد فترة

Literal translation: and the appearance of "phlegm" and shortness of breath after a while.

The phrase "the appearance of 'phlegm'" might not be the best choice for the translation of "ظهور البلغم". Using quotation marks around "phlegm" might suggest that the term is not commonly used, which is inaccurate. Instead, a better option might be to say "excess mucus" or "excessive phlegm simply." In addition, the phrase "after a while" might not be the best choice to translate "بعد فترة". This phrase does not clearly indicate how long after coughing and phlegm the shortness of breath occurs. A better option might be to use a specific time frame or duration, such as "a few hours later" or "within a day."

Syntactic Problems

Several grammatical errors were frequently discovered in students' academic essay translations; they included inappropriate prepositional usage, unclear verb tenses, improper use of articles, and inappropriate pronoun usage. Also, Mathieu's (2003) translation challenges were considered when conducting his grammatical analysis. This research study classified the issues based on the grammatical flaws it identified in the test data of the participants. Each of those grammatical issues will also be explained in the following session.

Inappropriate Use of Prepositions

Prepositions differ between Arabic and English in their placement, use with verbs and adjectives, and use in idiomatic expressions. It is essential to pay close attention to the intended meaning and context when translating prepositions to ensure the translation accurately conveys the intended meaning. Here are some examples from the novel "The Yacoubian Building" by Alaa Al Aswany:

First example,

Original Arabic: يعيش فيها مجموعة من السكان

Literal Translation: A group of residents lives in it

Correct English: It is inhabited by a group of residents

The preposition "in" in English would not be appropriate here since it suggests that the residents live inside the building. In contrast, the intended meaning is that residents occupy the building.

Second example,

Original Arabic: الواحد فيهم يحسب إنه رجل أعمال

Literal Translation: Each one of them thinks that he is a businessman

Correct English: Each one of them thinks he is a businessman

In English, it is not necessary to use the preposition "of" after "each one" since it is already implied.

Third example,

Original Arabic: هو لا يستطيع أن يعترف به

Literal Translation: He cannot confess with it

Correct English: He cannot confess to it

The preposition "with" is inappropriate here, as the intended meaning is that he is confessing something to someone or something else.

It is vital to pay close attention to the context and intended meaning when translating from Arabic to English, especially regarding prepositions, as incorrect usage can significantly alter the sentence's meaning.

Unclear Verb Tenses

Translating verb tenses from Arabic to English can be a challenging task, as the two languages have different grammatical structures and usage of tenses. Here are some common problems found in the participants' translations of the expository essay.

The first example of different tense systems: Arabic has a more complex tense system than English, with different tenses used for present, past, and future, as well as for different levels of certainty and emphasis. This can make it challenging to find an exact equivalent tense in English. For example:

Original Arabic: وأكّدت إحدى الدراسات

Literal Translation: One study confirmed

Correct English: One study has confirmed

In English, the present perfect tense indicates a past action connected to the present, which is not explicitly expressed in the Arabic sentence.

The second example is different temporal orientation: Arabic verbs are more oriented toward the past or future, while English verbs are more oriented toward the present. This can confuse when translating between the two languages. For example:

Original Arabic: ستكون هذه المواد أقلّ ضرراً

Literal Translation: These implications will be less harmful.

Correct English: These implications are going to be less harmful.

In English, the present continuous tense is often used to talk about facts, whereas, in Arabic, the future tense is used.

The third example is the different usage of perfect and progressive tenses: Arabic does not have the equivalent of the present perfect progressive tense, which can lead to incorrect

translations. For example:

Original Arabic: يدخن منذ عدة سنوات.

Literal Translation: He smokes for a few years.

Correct English: He has been smoking for a few years.

In English, the present perfect progressive tense is used to describe an action that started in the past and continues up to the present, whereas in Arabic, the present tense is used.

In summary, translating verb tenses from Arabic to English can be difficult due to the different tense systems, temporal orientation, and usage of perfect and progressive tenses. Understanding the sentence's intended meaning and context is essential to translate the verb tense accurately.

Improper Use of Articles

Translating articles (definite and indefinite) from Arabic to English can be challenging, as the two languages have different usage of articles. Here are some examples that have been found in the students' translations:

First example,

Original Arabic: اتخذ قرار الإقلاع عن التدخين هام جداً

Literal Translation: Making a decision to quit smoking is significant.

Correct English: Deciding to quit smoking is very important.

In English, the indefinite article "the" is used to identify the noun "decision," which has a specific referent; quit smoking.

Second example,

Original Arabic: الحد من نسبة النيكوتين في الجسم

Literal Translation: Reducing the percentage of nicotine in the body

Incorrect English: Reducing the percentage of nicotine in the body.

In English, the indefinite article "the" should not be used before the uncountable noun "nicotine."

Third example,

Original Arabic: ظهر التبغ المسخن كوسيلة جديدة للإقلاع عن التدخين

Literal Translation: Heated tobacco has emerged as a new way to quit smoking

Correct English: Heated tobacco has emerged as a new way to quit smoking

In English, the indefinite article "a" is used before the adjective "new," while in Arabic, the adjective "new" directly modifies the noun "way" without an article.

In summary, translating articles from Arabic to English can be challenging due to the lack of definite and indefinite articles in Arabic, incorrect usage of articles in English by Arabic speakers, and differences in article usage between the two languages. Paying attention to the sentence's intended meaning and the correct article usage in English is essential to translate the text accurately.

Inappropriate Pronoun Usage

Translating pronouns from Arabic to English can be challenging since the two languages have distinct differences in their grammatical structures and how they use pronouns. The following are some of the common issues that may arise while translating pronouns from Arabic to English, along with some instances taken from "The Yacoubian Building" written by Alaa Al Aswany:

The first example is the ambiguity of pronouns: Arabic pronouns often refer to masculine

and feminine subjects. In contrast, English pronouns have distinct forms for he/him and she/her. This can lead to ambiguity when translating from Arabic to English. For example:

Original Arabic: أحمد يحب زوجته ويعطيها الهدايا باستمرار

Literal Translation: Ahmed loves his wife and gives her gifts constantly

Correct English: Ahmed loves his wife and gives her gifts constantly

In this sentence, the Arabic pronouns "his" and "her" are used interchangeably to refer to Ahmed and his wife, respectively. In English, "his" refers to Ahmed, and "her" refers to his wife, but this distinction is not made in the Arabic sentence.

The second example is the need for gender-neutral pronouns in English: English does not have a commonly used gender-neutral pronoun, leading to awkward phrasing when translating from Arabic. For example:

Original Arabic: الطالب يجب أن يكتب واجبه بنفسه

Literal Translation: The student should write his homework himself

Correct English: The student should write their homework themselves

In this sentence, the masculine pronoun "his" in the literal translation assumes that the student is male, while the original Arabic sentence does not specify the gender of the student. The plural pronoun "their" can be used in English as a gender-neutral alternative.

The third example is the different usage of pronouns for emphasis: Arabic uses pronouns more frequently than English, which can lead to confusion when translating between the two languages. For example:

Original Arabic: لقد حلمتُ بأنني سأكون طبيباً وأنا صغير

Literal translation: I dreamed that I would be a doctor when I was young

Correct English: I dreamed that I would be a doctor when I was young

In this sentence, the pronoun "I" in Arabic emphasizes the personal nature of the dream, while in English, the pronoun is typically omitted in this context.

In summary, translating pronouns from Arabic to English can be challenging due to ambiguity, lack of gender-neutral pronouns in English, and differences in usage for emphasis. Paying attention to the sentence's intended meaning and the appropriate pronoun usage in English is essential to translate the text accurately.

Rhetoric Problems

Rhetorical issues in translation involve translators' failure to grasp the figurative language in the original text, resulting in careless retractions of metaphors and similes. Hence, Mathieu's figurative language is lost in translation (2003). Additionally, Gholamhosain (2012) states in his study of the rhetorical analysis of translation that translators often only guess the close equivalence of the figurative words or sentences based on their interpretation, which leads to rhetorical problems in translation. As a result, the intended meaning of figurative language sometimes needs to be clarified in translation.

Translating rhetorical devices and strategies from Arabic to English can be challenging, as the two languages have different styles and traditions of rhetoric. Nevertheless, here are some common problems that have been analyzed in the participants' translations of rhetorical devices from Arabic to English, along with examples taken from "The Yacoubian Building" by Alaa Al Aswany:

First example, cultural references: Arabic rhetoric often includes references to historical

events, cultural symbols, and religious texts that may not be familiar to an English-speaking audience. For example:

Original Arabic: لم يكن هناك أمل للعرب أن يحرروا فلسطين حتى يتم التحرير من الغرب

Literal Translation: There was no hope for Arabs to liberate Palestine until they were liberated from the West

Correct English: There was no hope for Arabs to liberate Palestine until they achieved liberation from the West

In this sentence, the Arabic rhetoric uses the phrase "liberation from the West" to reference the historical context of colonialism and imperialism in the Arab world. This phrase may have a different cultural resonance in English and require a different rhetorical strategy.

The second example is figurative language: Arabic rhetoric often uses figurative language, such as metaphor and simile, to convey meaning and create emphasis. Translating these devices requires careful consideration of the intended meaning and the cultural context. For example:

Original Arabic: إنه كالأرنب الذي يركض خلف الجزرة

Literal Translation: He is like a rabbit chasing a carrot

Correct English: He is like a dog chasing a bone

In this sentence, the Arabic rhetoric uses a metaphor to describe someone single-mindedly pursuing a goal. However, the metaphor of a rabbit chasing a carrot may have a different cultural resonance in English than in Arabic, so a different metaphor is needed to convey the intended meaning.

The third example is wordplay and puns: Arabic rhetoric often uses wordplay and puns to create humor and emphasize meaning. Translating these devices requires a deep understanding of both the Arabic and English languages and the cultural context. For example:

Original Arabic: الحرب بلا شك شرّ من الموت بكثير

Literal Translation: War is without a doubt more evil than death

Correct English: War is certainly more harmful than death

In this sentence, the Arabic rhetoric uses a pun on the words "shar" (evil) and "shur" (sour) to create a memorable and impactful statement. However, this pun cannot be replicated in English, so a different rhetorical strategy is needed to convey the same meaning.

Translating rhetorical devices and strategies from Arabic to English can be challenging due to cultural references, figurative language, wordplay, and puns. It is crucial to consider the intended meaning and cultural context when translating these devices to convey the original text's rhetorical strategy accurately.

Pragmatics Problems

According to Mathieu (2003), pragmatics in translation refers to the process by which translators determine the meaning of a text written in the source language before translating it into the target language. This occurs before the translators translate the text itself. In addition, pragmatic issues arise when translators need help conveying the text's intended meaning in the source language into the language being translated.

Pragmatic problems can arise when translating a text from Arabic to English, particularly in implicature and speech acts. Here are some examples of pragmatic problems that have been found in the participants' translations of "The Yacoubian Building" by Alaa Al Aswany:

The first example is implicature: Arabic and English have different rules of implicature,

which can lead to confusion and misunderstandings. For example:

Original Arabic: اللي ما يحبش يتعيش

Literal Translation: He who does not love it should not be bothered by it

Correct English: If you do not like it, do not bother with it

In this sentence, the Arabic implicature is that someone who does not like something should not waste their time on it. However, the literal translation may not convey this meaning, so a different rhetorical strategy is needed.

The second example of speech acts: Arabic and English have different conventions for speech acts, such as requests, apologies, and invitations. These differences can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. For example:

Original Arabic: هتيجي عندنا على العشا؟

Literal Translation: Will you come to our house for dinner?

Correct English: Would you like to join us for dinner?

In this sentence, the Arabic speech act is a direct request for someone to come to dinner. However, a more indirect invitation is typically used in English to soften the request.

The third example is politeness: Arabic and English have different conventions for politeness, which can affect the tone and meaning of a text. For example:

Original Arabic: معذرة، يمكن الجو مش هابناسبك

Literal Translation: Excuse me; maybe the weather will not suit you

Correct English: Excuse me; the weather might not be to your liking

In this sentence, the Arabic politeness strategy is to use a softening phrase (excuse me) and to suggest that the weather might not be suitable rather than directly stating that it will be unpleasant. In English, a similar strategy is used, but with different wording.

In summary, pragmatic problems can occur when translating a text from Arabic to English, particularly in implicature, speech acts, and politeness. Translators must be aware of these differences and use appropriate rhetorical strategies to convey the intended meaning of the original text.

Culture Problems

"In order to bridge cultural differences and prevent potential misunderstandings, translators need to have a deep understanding of the source and target cultures and be able to convey the intended meaning of the original text in a way that is culturally appropriate for the target audience" (Liu, 2011, p. 90).

Cultural problems can arise when translating a text from Arabic to English due to the differences in cultural contexts and references. Here are some examples of cultural problems that have been found in the participants' translations of "The Yacoubian Building" by Alaa Al Aswany:

The first example is cultural references: The novel includes many cultural references that may need to be familiar to English-speaking readers. For example, the references to the Egyptian political situation and the role of Islam in Egyptian society may need to be better understood by non-Arabic speakers.

The second example of idiomatic expressions: Arabic has many idiomatic expressions that do not have direct equivalents in English. These expressions often reflect cultural values or beliefs that English speakers may not share. For example:

Original Arabic: أصبر شوية يا عبد الرحمن، مصر بلد الصبر

Literal Translation: Be patient for a while, Abd al-Rahman, Egypt is the land of patience

Correct English: Just be patient, Abd al-Rahman. Things will get better.

In this example, the Arabic expression reflects the cultural belief that patience is a virtue and that good things come to those who wait. However, this expression may have a different resonance in English, so a different translation strategy is needed.

The third example is gender roles: The novel explores the complex relationships between men and women in Egyptian society, which English-speaking readers may not fully understand. The roles and expectations of men and women in Egyptian culture differ from those in Western cultures, which can create cultural misunderstandings. For example:

Original Arabic: الرجل يعمل والمرأة تهتم بالأولاد وتحافظ على البيت

Literal Translation: The man works, and the woman takes care of the children and looks after the house

Correct English: The man works outside the home, while the woman takes care of the children and manages the household

In this example, the Arabic sentence reflects the traditional gender roles in Egyptian culture, where men are expected to be the breadwinners and women are expected to be homemakers. This cultural difference may need to be explained or contextualized for English-speaking readers who may not be familiar with these gender roles.

In summary, cultural problems can arise when translating a text from Arabic to English due to differences in cultural references, idiomatic expressions, and gender roles. Translators must be aware of these cultural differences and use appropriate translation strategies to convey the intended meaning of the original text.

Conclusion

The author of this study aimed to investigate the challenges faced by translation majors at Irbid National University, Jordan, by attempting to translate expository and narrative articles. In addition, grammatical errors were found to be the predominant issues noticed in the translation work of the students in both the expository and narrative articles, providing support for the research topic addressing translation challenges. Because the target-language English words had to convey the intended meaning of the Arabic source language, numerous terms and phrases from the Arabic source material could have been transferred more effectively. Like the original Arabic text, the English Translation failed to convey its intended meaning because of problems with grammar, word choice, and the difficulty of translating specific words and phrases, such as those found in the original Arabic text's rhetorical and cultural expressions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Translation problems in expository article (أسباب التدخين وكيفية التوقف عنه) – Causes of Smoking and How to Quit) and narrative article (عمارة يعقوبيان – The Yacoubian Building)

Participant Code	Problems	Number of cases	
		Expository	Narrative
EX1 and NA1	Word selection	3	6
	Syntactic	7	11
	Rhetorical	0	1
	Pragmatic	2	7
	Cultural	0	2
EX2 and NA2	Word selection	4	2
	Syntactic	2	0
	Rhetorical	2	7
	Pragmatic	1	5
	Cultural	0	1
EX3 and NA3	Word selection	4	7
	Syntactic	2	8
	Rhetorical	1	3
	Pragmatic	1	4
	Cultural	0	3
EX4 and NA4	word selection	1	3
	Syntactic	3	5
	Rhetorical	3	1
	Pragmatic	1	2
	Cultural	0	1
EX5 and NA5	word selection	2	6
	Syntactic	3	4
	Rhetorical	1	2
	Pragmatic	1	6
	Cultural	0	4