



Reducing the Ambiguity in Translating Prepositions from English into Arabic

Dr. Israa Hamid Shnain Alnasery* 

ai3773246@gmail.com

Abstract

The study seeks to identify the common difficulties and ambiguities that arise when translating prepositions from English into Arabic and to provide suggestions for improving the precision and understandability of this process. Data are collected from a wide range of online translations carried out by translators with varying degrees of training and proficiency. The findings of a study have highlighted the importance of considering the intricate details of the target language and its cultural background while translating prepositions. The study suggests that linguistic and cultural variations can lead to difficulties when translating idiomatic statements that contain prepositions. Prepositional idioms, which are commonly used in informal English, can be particularly challenging to translate accurately in other languages. The study suggests that language proficiency alone is insufficient for accurate translation. Translators must also take into account cultural and emotional nuances while translating prepositions to ensure that the intended meaning is conveyed accurately.

Keywords: Linguistic differences, English slang, idiomatic sentences, Prepositions.

* Translation Assistance lecturer, College of Education, Al-Farahidi University, Iraq..

Cite this article as: Alnasery, Israa Hamid Shnain. (2024). Reducing the Ambiguity in Translating Prepositions from English into Arabic , *Arts for Linguistic & Literary Studies*, 6(2): 541 -555.

© This material is published under the license of Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0), which allows the user to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. It also allows adapting, transforming or adding to the material for any purpose, even commercially, as long as such modifications are highlighted and the material is credited to its author.



تقليل الغموض في ترجمة حروف الجر من الإنجليزية إلى العربية

د. إسراء حامد شنين الناصري^{*}ai3773246@gmail.com

ملخص:

يهدف البحث إلى تحديد الصعوبات وأشكال الغموض الشائعة التي تنشأ عند ترجمة حروف الجر من الإنجليزية إلى العربية وتقديم اقتراحات لتحسين دقة الترجمة وفهمها. تم جمع عينات الدراسة من مجموعة متنوعة من المترجمين عبر الإنترنت بمستويات مختلفة من التدريب والخبرة. أبرزت نتائج الدراسة أهمية النظر في التفاصيل المعقدة للغة المستهدفة وخلفيتها الثقافية أثناء ترجمة حروف الجر. تشير الدراسة إلى أن الاختلافات اللغوية والثقافية يمكن أن تؤدي إلى صعوبات عند ترجمة العبارات الاصطلاحية التي تحتوي على حروف الجر. يمكن أن تكون مصطلحات حروف الجر، التي يشيع استخدامها في اللغة الإنجليزية غير الرسمية، صعبة بشكل خاص للترجمة بدقة إلى لغات أخرى. تشير الدراسة إلى أن إتقان اللغة وحده غير كاف للترجمة الدقيقة. يجب على المترجمين أيضاً مراعاة الفروق الثقافية والعاطفية أثناء ترجمة حروف الجر لضمان نقل المعنى المقصود بدقة. الكلمات المفتاحية: الاختلافات اللغوية، الإنجليزية العامية، الجمل الاصطلاحية، حروف الجر.

* مدرس الترجمة المساعد - قسم اللغة الانجليزية - كلية التربية - جامعة الفراهيدي - العراق.

للاقتباس: الناصري، إسراء حامد شنين. (2024). تقليل الغموض في ترجمة حروف الجر من الإنجليزية إلى العربية، الآداب
للدراستات اللغوية والأدبية، 6(2): 541-555.

© نُشر هذا البحث وفقاً لشروط الرخصة Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)، التي تسمح بنسخ البحث وتوزيعه ونقله بأي شكل من الأشكال، كما تسمح بتكييف البحث أو تحويله أو إضافته إليه لأي غرض كان، بما في ذلك الأغراض التجارية، شريطة نسبة العمل إلى صاحبه مع بيان أي تعديلات أجريت عليه.



1. Introduction

Prepositions function as connecting words in sentences, linking nouns to other nouns or to other parts of speech. Although they may not always have a clear meaning on their own, they are essential for effective communication. Prepositions make up a significant portion of function words that indicate different relationships between their complements and other words that precede them in a sentence. They can indicate temporal, locative, and directional relationships, among other functional relationships (Fareh, 2009). Prepositions, as function words, are crucial for constructing sentences. Pinker (1994) states that function words "delineate larger phrases into which NPs, VPs, and APs fit, thereby providing scaffolding for the sentence." He also notes that "Function words also capture much of what distinguishes one language from another grammatically." (Pinker, 1994) For translators, one of the most difficulties is translating prepositions from English into Arabic. Upon further analysis of this grammatical phenomenon, it is found that the main challenge still lies in identifying the appropriate preposition and understanding its usage in Arabic. There are various differences in the ways linguists perceive prepositions from a linguistic standpoint (Al Yaari and Almaflehi, 2020).

Translating from English to Arabic presents inherent challenges, particularly with regards to linguistic concerns. Prior research have been conducted to identify common mistakes made when converting prepositions from English to Arabic and to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying language ambiguities and difficulties. Rabadi and Althawbih (2018) state that when translating from English into Arabic, translators at translation offices often encounter challenges with Arabic prepositions. Inefficient translations may occur due to the incorrect usage of prepositions. However, more research is needed to address these challenges effectively. With further study, we can develop strategies to simplify the translation process and ensure that prepositions are accurately translated from English into Arabic. The objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the common difficulties and ambiguities encountered when translating prepositions from the English language to Arabic. The study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations to enhance the accuracy and comprehensibility of this translation process. By exploring the nuances and intricacies of preposition translation, the research seeks to contribute to the development of more effective and efficient translation practices between the two languages. The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the difficulties and sources of ambiguity when translating English prepositions into Arabic?
- 2- What role do cultural and contextual factors play in determining the most appropriate translation of English prepositions into Arabic?



2. Objective of The study

The aim of the study is to identify common issues and ambiguities that arise when translating prepositions from English into Arabic, and to provide suggestions for reducing these ambiguities and improving the precision and clarity of translation.

3. Literature Review

Akan et al (2019) explore the numerous issues that arise while translating literature from Arabic into English and provide appropriate and potential answers. Given the delicate and nuanced nature of language studies, translation presents a number of significant challenges. However, translating from Arabic to English makes it a more difficult endeavour. Therefore, in order to address the surface and deep relationships of language, a translator has to possess the necessary linguistic expertise. Transferring and changing several defining features from one language to another is another aspect of translation. Given the dissimilar and remote origins of Arabic and English, translating between the two scripts presents several challenges, including those related to vocabulary, syntax, sound, style, and use. This study aims to tackle the challenges associated with translating Arabic literature, particularly those in the language, into English. It also seeks to provide workable solutions to these difficulties that take into account many factors such as audience kinds, text complexity, cultural context, and so on. Arabic IPA transcriptions are provided when needed to improve this work's readability for non-native Arabic speakers.

A study by Abdou Saeed Mohamed (2011) examines looks at the various mistakes or issues that occur when translating from Arabic to English. He examines the challenges faced by new translators (NTs), novice translators (Ts), and student translators (STs) when translating from Arabic to English. The study starts with the assumption that Arabic and English are rarely directly equivalent in both languages due to their belonging to different linguistic families. The study also examines the challenges faced by translators. A novel, a travel guidebook, an editorial, and three scholarly abstracts translated by reputable Yemeni publishing companies and translation services are examined for this purpose. The aim of this analysis is to determine how closely translations by translators reflect the challenges faced by native speakers and source text writers. The research adopts an eclectic approach, drawing from various linguistic and translation concepts rather than strictly adhering to a single paradigm. Its main framework is Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), categorizing issues into ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning metafunctions based on his taxonomy. Additionally, problems beyond the text are explored. Several SFG-based translation models are utilized in the research to assist in analyzing translation challenges from Arabic to English across these four categories. These models include Hatim and Mason's sociometric model (1990), Hervey et al.'s register analysis model (1992), Baker's equivalency model (1990), and House's sociometric model (1977, 1997). The study concludes that STs,



NTs, and Ts face ideational, interpersonal, and textual challenges, as well as extra-textual issues. Structural and cultural differences between languages, reliance on dictionaries over understanding lexical meaning, disparities in cohesion and coherence systems, lack of context consideration, and unfamiliarity with text typologies and genre conventions contribute to these difficulties. Participants tend to translate using a bottom-up approach, striving for close adherence to the original text, neglecting the potential differences in how the three metafunctions are expressed in the two languages. The research indicates that the translation teaching and curriculum at Taiz University significantly contribute to the lack of proficiency in students and aspiring translators. The existing curriculum fails to incorporate the latest theoretical and practical advancements in translation and related fields. The predominant teaching method is transmissionist, providing no assignments or initiatives for students to engage with.

Al Jarf (2022) explores the difficulties encountered by Saudi undergraduate student translators when translating English word + preposition collocations, such as verb + preposition, noun + preposition, and adjective + preposition, into Arabic. To identify the various types of translation errors, translation methods, causes of translation mistakes, and contexts in which the errors occurred, a collection of inaccurate word + preposition collocations was compiled from the graduation projects of student translators. The comparison of word + preposition collocations in English and Arabic revealed the following groups: (i) cases where the Arabic word + preposition collocations match those of their English equivalents in form and meaning (depend on يعتمد على, apologize for/to يعتذر ل/عن, interested in مهتم ب); (ii) cases where a preposition is used in the English collocation but no preposition is used in the Arabic equivalent (wait for ينتظر); (iii) cases where an Arabic preposition is used after a word but no such preposition is used in their English equivalent (gave him tea قدم له الشاي, offered him a proposal عرض عليه اقتراح, stopped participating توقف عن المشاركة, lack something يفتقر إلى). The students' incorrect translations of certain prepositions in word + preposition collocations were revealed by the results. 84% of the time, the students made translation errors by replacing a correct preposition with an incorrect one, 13% of the time, they inserted a preposition after an Arabic phrase that didn't need one, and 3% of the time, they removed a preposition from a translation that needed one. Furthermore, 81% of the errors were intralingual because of insufficient proficiency in L1, or Arabic, and 19% of the errors were interlingual (transfer errors from English). Extraneous mistakes accounted for 44% of the errors, prepositional misuse in the students' local dialect accounted for 21%, and misunderstanding of prepositional usage guidelines in Arabic language caused 18% of the errors. 11% of the mistakes were semantic, 3% were stylistic, and 86% were syntactic. The findings are presented in full, along with suggestions for translation education.



A. Aldahesh (2013) states that prepositions are context-sensitive in all languages; their meaning cannot be inferred from isolated, decontextualized definitions, but is determined by surrounding contextual and textual elements. Prepositions are also unique to each language, with distinct ways of utilization that may differ from other languages. By comparing the collocational and colligational phenomena of verb-preposition structure in English and Arabic, this study offers insight into context sensitivity and language uniqueness. The aim is to determine how much the differences can influence the process of comprehending the main idea of Arabic press writings and to provide some theoretically and empirically supported suggestions for English language learners of Arabic. Twenty-five English learners of Arabic took an exam consisting of multiple-choice questions and a translation examination. The findings showed that English language learners of Arabic had several challenges while attempting to understand the verb-preposition pattern in Arabic. However, the primary causes of these challenges were context sensitivity and language specificity concerns.

Hummadi et al (2020) state that when translating Qur'anic verses from Arabic into English, translators of the Holy Quran encounter several challenges. How to rhetorically convey the implied meanings (implicatures) of the prepositional words in the Holy Qur'an are one of these conundrums. In some passages of the Holy Qur'an, the translation of Arabic prepositional phrases may result in a rhetorical loss when conveying their implicature in the target text (TT). When translating a text from one language to another, it is important to understand that there may be a difference between the explicit meaning of the words and the implicit meaning that is conveyed through the use of certain rhetorical techniques. This implicit meaning is not directly stated, but it is still intended to be communicated. For example, when translating prepositions, translators may only translate the literal meaning of the word, but they may miss the implied meaning that results from its use. It is important for translators to be aware of this and to accurately interpret both the explicit and implicit meanings of the text. Their study examines the problem of losing rhetorical impact when translating prepositional phrases in Qur'anic verses and identifies the root of this issue. It also proposes a method that, in certain cases, proves to be informative and beneficial in addressing the challenges of interpreting Arabic prepositional phrases in Qur'anic verses. It conducts a descriptive qualitative content analysis of the Qur'anic verses and their corresponding English translations. The Relevance Theory and the differentiation between explicature and implicature of these phrases are utilized to explain why the English translations fail to convey the rhetorical nuances of the prepositional phrases. In order to achieve meaning equivalency in translation, translators must be aware of both the explicitly stated and implicit meanings of prepositions. These meanings can be recovered by consulting Arabic heritage resources and interpretation books that focus on the rhetorical functions of prepositional alternation in Qur'anic verses. The analysis's



findings and the newly proposed process have been confirmed by a Qur'anic sciences and Arabic language specialist who is also fluent in English.

Kanari (1998) addresses the challenge of translating prepositions between English and Arabic. This issue is evident in speaking, writing, and translation. The root of the problem lies in stubbornness. The study explores the problem and endeavors to find a resolution. It delves into the quantity and types of prepositions, prepositional placement, prepositional collocations, the challenges of translating prepositions, and potential solutions. The study ultimately determines that prepositions and phrasal verbs encounter significant difficulties, but these issues are not insurmountable. It needs a translator who is knowledgeable with the verb, noun, and adjective prepositions in particular as well as the structures of both languages. It is important for translators to remember that they are Prepositions in this type of language have several meanings, but not all of them are shared. All forms of phrasal verbs, verbs, necessary prepositions, and their meanings should be known to the translators.

Studies have highlighted the inherent difficulties of translating from English to Arabic, particularly when it comes to linguistic issues. Scholars have endeavored to identify common errors made while translating prepositions from English to Arabic and gain a deeper understanding of the underlying linguistic challenges. However, there remains a need for further research to address any ambiguities that may arise during the translation of prepositions from English to Arabic. The aim of this study is to thoroughly examine the common challenges and ambiguities that occur when translating prepositions from Arabic to English. The study seeks to provide insightful analysis and helpful suggestions to enhance the accuracy and comprehensibility of this translation process. It aims to contribute to the development of more effective and efficient translation procedures between the two languages by exploring the nuances and complexities of preposition translation.

4. Challenges in Translating Prepositions

A preposition is a word that describes the relationship between two entities. The prepositional complement represents one of the items, while another part of the phrase represents the other (Quirk et al, 1985). Prepositions also mark various functions, a number of languages that have no case system (as English and French) usually employ to mark beneficiaries. Prepositions are used for various purposes, including indicating beneficiaries in languages that lack a case system. Examples of such languages include English and French. Propositions commonly occur with nouns, verbs, adjectives, and past participles in a way that does not follow any logical pattern, as both translators and English language learners have recognized (Kanari, 1998).

Translating prepositions between Arabic and English can be challenging due to their different grammatical structures and prepositional use. Translators incorrectly translated English prepositions into



Arabic, possibly due to a lack of understanding of their correct usage, various applications, and the inability to provide suitable equivalents (Almaloul, 2014; Al Yaari, 2013; Terdjat, 2012). As prepositions can have multiple meanings, both denotative and connotative, some linguists allow the substitution of other prepositions. This practice is known as homonymy, and it is rejected because it can lead to misunderstandings and confusion in language usage. Speakers and Translators often make the mistake of substituting one preposition for another, disregarding its proper and intended meaning. This can have a detrimental impact on the target language as the preposition complements the verb (Rabadi & Althawbih, 2018:43)

5. Prepositions in Arabic

Prepositions and particles that combine with both verbs and adjectives are abundant in Arabic. Arab grammarians have not precisely defined prepositions. Prepositions have been categorized as a type of particles. According to Louchene (2006), particles are described as "words that link with other parts of speech, but do not have meaning on their own." Particles are generally defined as "words that have a grammatical function but do not belong to the noun or verb classes or their derivatives" (Badawi et al, 2014). Thus, prepositions can be defined based on both their function and meaning.

There are up to twenty particles in the closed category of Arabic prepositions. The prepositions in Arabic that all grammarians agree upon (Min- ila – hatha – hasha – cade- fii- kan – cala- muth – munthu – rubba – lam – kay – waw – taa' – kaaf – baa' – laa'la – lawla). Moreover, specific Arabic dialects have identified prepositions not listed here, like (matta, kay) in the Hudhail dialect and (laa'la) in the "uqail dialect. Additionally, (maa') is occasionally considered a locative adverb but is also viewed as a preposition in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Some Arabic prepositions, like "Khalla" and "hasha," are believed to have ancient origins and are rarely used in MSA. Others, such as kay, matta, and laa'la are only marginally used in poetry in older Arabic dialects, and are considered prepositions only by Ibn Malik (Husni and Zaher, 2020)

Several English prepositions are not treated as prepositions in Arabic; rather, they are considered adverbs or semi-prepositions, such as down, beneath, below, up, over, and above. Semi-prepositions are characterized by their multifunctionality, being linguistic elements that can function as prepositions, adverbs, and nouns (Almahameed, 2018)

6. Prepositions in English

In English, there are numerous prepositions, totaling fifty to sixty. There are two main categories of English prepositions based on the number of words they contain. The first kind is simple prepositions, also known as single-word prepositions, such as under and around. The second kind is complex or multi-word prepositions, comprising two or three words, like according to, on behalf of, with regard to, and so on. It is not



possible to freely construct complex prepositions; for example, in spite of cannot become *out spite of. As new combinations can be formed, complex prepositions are considered open class, with an unlimited quantity.

Prepositions in English can convey the following meanings: Relationships in space such as at, on, in, close, between, up, and from, cause: because, for, from, to, and at; Time: at, on, in, before, after, during, and through, respect prepositions (with reference to – with regard to), Exception and Addition (aside – except for – a part from), and negation (but- for) (Quirk et al, 1985).

The English prepositional system differs from prepositions in other languages through preposition combinations, where a preposition comes after a specific noun, verb, or adjective. It is important to note that because preposition combinations are so idiomatic and unexpected in English, they can be challenging for non-native speakers to learn. There are no set guidelines that EFL speakers may adhere to in order to learn these prepositions, making it extremely difficult for non-native English speakers to utilise them. (Almahameed, 2018)

7. Limitations of the Study

The study is an in-depth exploration of certain intricacies involved in the translation of prepositions from English to Arabic. It delves into the underlying factors that contribute to the challenges faced by translators. The study takes into consideration the cultural differences that play a crucial role in the accurate translation of prepositions. By examining the various nuances and idiomatic expressions that are unique to Arabic and English, the study provides valuable insights into the contextual and cultural differences that often pose difficulties in translation. The ultimate goal of the study is to identify solutions that can help improve the accuracy and effectiveness of preposition translation from English to Arabic. The current study is limited in terms of the number of translations and participants involved. However, the data collected from this diverse group of participants provides valuable insights into the quality of English-to-Arabic translation and can be used to improve future translation efforts. Twenty texts were selected for the study, each containing a variety of prepositions. These samples were translated from English into Arabic and analyzed to determine the quality of the translation. The translations were evaluated based on factors such as accuracy, fluency, and naturalness.

While the study may concentrate on certain language pairings, such as the translation of prepositions from English to Arabic, further studies are needed to determine how prepositional ambiguities appear in other language combinations, taking into consideration particular syntactic and semantic considerations.

The study's results might be restricted to specific translation contexts or fields, like literary translation. More studies are needed to explore prepositional ambiguities in a wider range of translation scenarios to create solutions tailored to various linguistic requirements. Additionally, there is a need to investigate how machine translation systems handle prepositional ambiguities and to develop computational tools that



address these challenges effectively. Research in this area should focus on refining existing algorithms, enhancing machine learning models, and integrating linguistic knowledge to improve the accuracy of prepositional translation.

8. Method

8.1 Research approach

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine the complexities and ambiguities involved in translating English prepositions into Arabic. The primary focus of the study is to identify potential ambiguities that may arise during the translation process. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the nuances and challenges associated with translating prepositions between two distinct languages (English and Arabic).

8.2 Data Collection

Data was collected from a diverse group of individuals with varying skill levels and competencies, including novices, professionals, and specialists, using a parallel internet corpus for translation. The study will assess the quality of translation in twenty texts that feature diverse prepositions translated from English into Arabic. The evaluation will take into account the context and the multiple meanings conveyed by these prepositions in both languages. The aim is to determine the appropriateness, correctness, and consistency of the preposition usage in the target language. Through this analysis, we hope to gain valuable insights into the efficacy of translation techniques and the extent to which Arabic translations preserve or modify the subtleties of prepositional meaning.

9. Analysis and Discussion

There might be uncertainty in translation since there are many different methods to translate prepositions. Changing prepositions can alter the meaning of a sentence. The preposition "to" has various meanings when translated into Arabic. Translating the preposition "to" from English into Arabic can be challenging in some cases due to the variety of prepositions available in Arabic, which depend on the specific situation.

Prepositions have more than one meaning in Arabic (Lakoff, 1987), for instance:

When discussing occupation, the preposition used in the first phrase is "at". It should be noted that the Arabic equivalent of this preposition is undoubtedly "in". The translation of this English preposition will be understood in the same way in Arabic:

"She is working at an international school":

"هي تعمل في مدرسة دولية" (*Hiya ta'mal fi madrasat dawliya.*)



English speakers will understand that the preposition "at" in this sentence actually means "in". The difference lies in the written form: in Arabic, it is represented as في "in", while in English, it is written as "at".

"Another example is:

"They are waiting at the gate of the mall":

Arabic Translation 1: "هم ينتظرون في بوابة المركز التجاري." (*Hum yantathiroon fi babwat al-markaz al-tijari.*)

Arabic Translation 2: "هم ينتظرون عند بوابة المركز التجاري." (*Hum yantathiroon 'ind babwat al-markaz al-tijari.*)

Another example states that "Charge with" often connotes placing blame or making an accusation against someone. To put it another way, "He was charged with the task of completing the project" indicates that the project's completion was his responsibility. Conversely, "charge of" typically denotes having authority or being in command of something. For example, "She took charge of the department" denotes that she became the department's head or controller. But when it comes to the Arabic translation, there may be some misunderstanding because the term "charge of" has several connotations and because Arabic counterparts have subtle differences. "تهممة" (*tahammah*) is an Arabic word that means "charge with" or "accusation of." In the meantime, depending on the context, "charge of" can be translated as either "إشراف" (*ishraaf*) or "مسؤولية" (*mas'ooliyah*).

The prepositions used in the above sentences should be determined by a specific context and intended meaning in Arabic. Translation can be challenging due to the subtleties of Arabic, and depending on the context, several translations may be more accurate than others. A specific context is required for a more precise translation.

Prepositions have several meanings in both Arabic and English (Kanari, 1998). Prepositions in English can indicate place, time, direction, or possession, among other things. Prepositions in Arabic also have distinct purposes. For example, the preposition "on" has multiple meanings in Arabic:

Meaning	Translation
Physical State	English: "The book is on the table." Arabic: الزجاجاة على الطاولة (<i>al-zogaga 'ala at-tawila</i>).
Time or Date	English: "The meeting is on Monday." Arabic: سيكون الاجتماع يوم الاثنين (<i>sayakoun el ektmaa 'yawm al-ithnayn</i>).
Activity	English: "He is on the football team." Arabic: إنه في فريق كرة السلة (<i>innahu fi fariq kurat al kadam</i>).
Transportation	English: "I'll see Ahmed on the bus." Arabic: سأري احمد في الحافلة (<i>sa'araa Ahmed fi al-hāfila</i>).



English language employs a diverse range of prepositions that are capable of expressing a multitude of ideas that may not be effectively conveyed by the Arabic preposition "ب," bi. This can lead to confusion and difficulty for those who are not familiar with the intricacies of the English language.

Consider the following examples.

I write with a pen.

اكتب بالقلم (*Aktub bi al qalam*)

I bought the book for 20 dollars.

اشترت الكتاب بعشرين دولار (*ishtryt el kitab bi e'shreen dollar*)

We arrived by plane.

وصلنا بالطائرة (*Wasalna Bi Tae'raa*)

I spoke in Arabic.

تكلت باللغة العربية (*taklmt bi el Arabya*)

Moreover, the preposition "في" (fi) may be used to translate a large number of English prepositions into Arabic. "Fi" in Arabic usually means "in" or "at" in English, however how exactly it is interpreted depends on the sentence's context

.He studies at Harvard University. (place)

انه يدرس في جامعه هارفارد (*inhu yadres fi gam'aa Harvard*)

He will visit her at tree o'clock. (time)

سيزورها في الساعة الثالثة (*sayzorha fi el saa'a el thaltha*)

I visited him on feast (time)

زرتة في يوم العيد (*zorthu fi youm el l'd*)

it is important to remember that Arabic, like other languages, has its own prepositions that convey specific meanings and nuances. Therefore, while "في" (fi) and (bi) may often serve as a substitute translation for various English prepositions, it is crucial to consider the intended meaning to ensure accurate translation and message conveyance.

Idiomatic prepositions are prepositions used in specific phrases or expressions with meanings that cannot be inferred from the individual words alone. These prepositions often have unique or figurative meanings that go beyond their literal interpretations.

When rendering idiomatic expressions from English into Arabic that incorporate prepositions, translators may face inherent ambiguities, which are often compounded by linguistic and cultural disparities between the two languages. Such complexities are especially evident with prepositional idioms. According to Al Mubarak (2017), translators encountered challenges when attempting to identify appropriate English



equivalents for idioms. This was due to their limited exposure to the target language's culture and unfamiliarity with its cultural expressions, as well as the cultural differences between the two languages. Consequently, they were unable to produce a translation that was suitable or acceptable for the idioms.

To elucidate, let us examine several instances of these idioms and the translation challenges they may engender:

Believe in: In English, the preposition "in" signifies a sense of trust or faith in an entity or individual. However, Arabic might necessitate a different preposition depending on the context. For instance, "ثِقَّةً بِ" (thiqa bi) might be employed to denote trust in someone's abilities, whereas "أَمَنَ بِ" (amana bi) is typically used in the context of religious beliefs. The precision in selecting the appropriate preposition is crucial to avoid any ambiguity.

Dream of: The preposition "of" in English indicates the subject or the object of one's aspirations or dreams. For a faithful translation in Arabic, it is essential to consider the verb associated with the preposition meticulously. "حَلَمَ بِ" (halama bi) is often used when referring to aspirational dreams, such as achieving an objective, whereas "يحلُم ب" (yahlamu bi) might be utilized to describe dreaming of something during sleep.

Cultural competence plays a vital role in effectively interpreting and utilizing language. Skilled translators must carefully consider cultural nuances in referential, connotative, and idiomatic interpretations, as well as language-specific terminology and concepts. Additionally, it is essential to maintain cultural sensitivity when translating sensitive topics to produce a translation that the intended readers will find appropriate (Idlibi 2019).

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study sheds light on the different ambiguities encountered in the process of translating English prepositions into Arabic. Additionally, it tries to offer insightful recommendations that could potentially enhance the clarity and accuracy of the translation outcome. The study concluded that there are certain morphological, syntactic and semantic strategies that may be applied to reduce ambiguity when translating prepositions:

Arabic has many intricacies; thus translation may be difficult. Depending on the situation, several translations might be more accurate than others. A preposition's meaning can change based on context. Understanding the sentence's full meaning is necessary to interpret the preposition correctly. Previous studies have highlighted the crucial role of context in translation, particularly for languages like Arabic wherein the interpretation of words and phrases can significantly vary based on the surrounding context. According to Idlibi (2019), translators need contextual information to determine the correct sense of a text. This is acquired by engaging with the text, building and refining background knowledge.



Prepositions in Arabic and English can have several meanings. In English, prepositions can denote a variety of concepts, including location, time, direction, and possession. Prepositions have different functions in Arabic as well, thus while translating, it's crucial to take that into account.

It is important to know that prepositions in Arabic and English have different meanings and nuances. Therefore, while "some Arabic prepositions may act as an alternative translation for different English prepositions," it is crucial to consider the intended meaning to ensure accurate translation and effective communication.

Due to language and cultural differences, there could be certain challenges while translating idiomatic prepositions from English to Arabic. These challenges may be particularly apparent in relation to prepositional idioms. It's essential to understand these concepts in order to comprehend the preposition correctly. Accurate translation of idiomatic language requires more than just linguistic proficiency—one must also be cognizant of the cultural and emotional subtleties involved. Selecting phrases with a strong resonance in the target language and accurate expression of the intended idea is essential.

Achieving accurate translation of prepositions necessitates an in-depth understanding of both the source and target languages, along with their respective cultural contexts. Enhancing one's proficiency in translating prepositions, as well as other linguistic elements, can be facilitated through collaboration with native speakers, regular practice, and engagement with authentic materials.

Further research is needed on the various ambiguities that arise when translating prepositions from one language to another. Additional solutions and recommendations should be provided to help minimize these ambiguities.

References

- Akan, M. F., Karim, M. R., & Chowdhury, A. M. K. (2019). An analysis of Arabic-English translation: Problems and prospects. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 10(1), 58-65.
- Aldahesh, A. Y. (2013). Context sensitivity and language specificity of Arabic verb-preposition structure: The case of English learners of Arabic. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 5(3), 177- 197.
- Al-Jarf, R. (2022). Undergraduate student-translators' difficulties in translating English word+ preposition collocations to Arabic. *International Journal of Linguistics Studies (IJLS)*, 2(2), 60-72.
- Almahameed, Y. (2018). *Prepositions in English and Arabic. A comparative study*.
- Almaflehi, N. (2020). The Problem of Translating the Prepositions at, in and on into Arabic: An Applied Linguistic Approach. *Journal for the Study of English Linguistics*. 1(2),256-273. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jsel.v1i2.4744>
- Al Mubarak, A. A. (2017). The challenges of translating idioms from Arabic into English a closer look at al imam AL Mahdi University–Sudan. *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies*, 5(1), 53-64



- Al-Sowaidi, B., and Mohammed, T. (2023). An Exploration of Student Interpreters' Attitudes Towards the Undergraduate Interpreting Training Programmes at Yemeni Universities. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(3), 597-609.
- Al Yaari, S. A, and Almaflehi, N. (2013). The problem of translating the prepositions at, in and on into Arabic: An applied linguistic approach. *Journal for the Study of English linguistics*, 1(2), 256-273. doi:10.5296/jsel.v1i2.4744 URL
- Badawi, E., Carter, M., and Gully, A. (2014). *Modern Written Arabic: A Comprehensive Grammar (2nd ed.)*. Routledge Comprehensive Grammars. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fareh, S. (2009). Problems Arab EFL students encounter in learning prepositions. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, 10(1), 93-112.
- Hummadi, A. S., Mat Said, S. B., Hussein, R. M., Sabti, A. A., & Hattab, H. A. A. (2020). *Rhetorical Loss in Translating Prepositional Phrases of the Holy Qur'an*. *SAGE Open*, 10(1), 215824402090209. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020902094>
- Husni, R., & Zaher, A. (2020). *Working with Arabic prepositions: Structures and functions*. London and New York. Routledge.
- Idlibi, D. (2019). *The importance of context in translation. A study of some selected English and Arabic terms and concepts*. GRIN Verlag
- Kanakri, M. (1998). Problems of translating prepositions. *Journal of Faculty of Arts*. 21(1) 5-27
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Cognitive models and prototype theory*. In U. Neisser (Ed.), *Concepts and conceptual development: Ecological and intellectual factors in categorization* (pp. 63–100). Cambridge University Press.
- Louchene, N.E.N. (2006). *Ḥurūf al-Jarr fī al-'Arabīyah: Bayn al-Muṣṭalaḥ wa-Alwaṣīfah*. Alexandria: al-Maktab al-Jamī'ī al-Hadīth.
- Pinker, S. (1994). *The Language Instinct*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Mohammed, T. A. S. (2011). *A taxonomy of problems in arabic-english Translation: a systemic functional Linguistics approach* TawfEEK abdou.
- Mohammed, T. A. (2020). Investigating the Translation Programme at two Yemeni Universities in the Light of PACTE's Translation Competence Model. *Alustath*, 59(1), 103-121
- Muhamed, F. A. M. F. A. (2014). *Problems of using and translation English prepositions and Arabic* [Doctoral dissertation], Sudan University of Science & Technology).
- Rabadi, R. I., & Althawbih, H. H. (2018). Effects of a remedial linguistic program to improve the translation of Arabic prepositions by translators. *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies*, 2(2).40-53
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive grammar of the English language*. Longman.
- Terdjat, H. (2012). *Challenges encountered by Algerian EFL students when using the English prepositions "in", "on" and "at"* [Unpublished MA thesis], Mohamed Kheider University, Algeria.
- Satyakti, Y. (2023) .The Effect of Applying Sustainability (Maqasid Shariah) and Competition on Islamic Bank Financing. *Sustainability*, 15(17).

