
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Lexical Interference Problems that EFL Undergraduate Students in Jordan Encounter when Translating General Texts from Arabic into English

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ABSTRACT

The interference of one language into the other during translation is common among language students. This study was devoted to the lexical interference problems that English major undergraduate students in Jordanian universities encounter when translating Arabic texts into English. Twenty five of males and twenty five of females Fifty participants students were chosen to take the translation test, the responses were collected, analyzed and categorized into six lexical categories: collocation, polysemy, redundancy, synonyms, metaphors, and prepositions. The results showed that the students committed lexical interference due to determining sources including students' lack of the first language (L1) and the second language (L2) awareness including lack of L2 vocabulary, misuse of dictionaries, use of translation machines and carelessness. The study recommended holding an efficiency exam for the students, preparing special intensive reading skill for school and post-graduated students and paying more attention to language interference when teaching translation courses.

KEYWORDS

Arabic-English, Lexical Interference, Problems, Translation.

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1. Introduction

Differences between languages constitute one of the obstacles that hinder learners' abilities to use language properly, which in turn hinders effective communication. Applied linguistics research has shown that such linguistic differences between languages cause linguistic interference which is a major challenge that additional language learners encounter. When it comes to translation, translators also may encounter such challenges when they translate texts from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) (Havrášková, 2010). The linguistic differences between Arabic and English can be a problematic matter for translators. Accordingly, students are more likely to encounter linguistic interference. Based on this, this study addresses the problem of linguistic interference, specifically lexical interference among Arabic-speaking learners of English in Jordan. While an established line of research has addressed some linguistic interference problems in translation such as , lexical interference problems but they have not been addressed adequately (Dweik & Othman, 2017; Sabbah, 2015). Recently, more attempts of studying lexical interference particularly but the problems have not been explored enough (Nur, J., Akib, N., Nugroho, W., & Syamsuddin, 2023) Thus, this study fills a gap in the literature.

This study explores the lexical interference problems that Arab learners of English in a private Jordanian university may encounter when translating a variety of texts from Arabic into English. To achieve this objective, this study attempts to answer the following research question:

What are the lexical interference problems Arabic-speaking learners of English encounter when translating various texts from Arabic into English?

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It is worth mentioning that although the findings reported in this study are restricted to the sample, instrument, and resources available at the time of the research, these limitations open up doors for future research such as using different sampling techniques and instruments as well as delving into other interference issues.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Interference and translation

Interference can be understood in two different ways. In the narrow sense, it refers to transferring native language norms into a foreign language during its study (Bagana & Khapilina, 2006). According to Kellerman & Smith (1986), the term "cross-linguistic interference" encompasses phenomena such as: "transfer," "interference," "avoidance," "borrowing", and other aspects of language loss connected to a second language. Interference happens between the first and the second languages because of the similarities and differences between the two languages (Brown, 2007). Interference, according to Vannestål (2009), is the contact that occurs between L1 and L2. As such, interference can create syntactic, grammatical, lexical, semantic, or pragmatic irregularities in the target language, which are the most common causes of interference. Interference entails transferring a particular expression or passage from the ST into the TT which may include words, phrases, idioms, metaphors, concepts, or entire grammatical structures. (Havrášková, 2010, p.8). The transference of elements from the first language to another language occurs unconsciously when two language systems meet, resulting in aberrant tone, accent, uncommon word order, erroneous prefix or ending, or unclear lexical collocation or metaphor for the message's addressee. As a result, interference occurs at morphological, phonological, lexical, semantic, phonetic, and syntactic (Turaeva, 2020).

Interference in translation studies is also known as translationese, interlanguage, and linguistic influence codeswitching, and is defined by Aixelá (2009) as a translation that uses words or syntactic structures drawn from the original language but cannot stand alone as a total replacement for the source text. Many studies show that interference is widely employed in translation to signal problems that can be emphatically traced back to the source language. Newmark (1988, p. 21) states that "unnatural translation is marked by interference, primarily from the SL text, possibly from a third language known to the translator including his own, if it is not the target language." Moreover, he adds that interference is used to distinguish foreign structures from the source text.

Interference is considered a common occurrence in most translations. It could be called a type of universal translation. Supporting this claim, the translation cannot be in isolation from formal equivalents (Toury, 1979). The language of the source text from which they are translated profoundly influences most translations in some manner. Because the level of interference relies on a translator's ability, interference is more likely to occur in student translations. Therefore, interference is one of the aspects that influences the final product's quality and is dependent on the level of experience. Thus, it is deserving of additional attention. This is because a translator is invariably impacted by the original text language. Moreover, the extent of this influence is determined by the culture's translation legacy (Havrášková, 2010).

2.2 Classification of Interference

According to Thorovský (2009), linguistic interference can be categorized into four main types, which are (1) interference at the word and collocation level (lexical interference), (2) grammatical interference, (3) syntactic interference, and (4) interference in orthography. Thorovský also elaborated on the subtypes of lexical Interference as follows:

1. Surface lexical interference (false friends): arises when a lexical unit in the source language visually, i.e. orthographically, resembles or has much resemblance lexical unit in the target language that is not its counterpart.
2. Semantic interference: this occurs when the meanings of the source and target lexical units, which are only partial equivalents, overlap.
3. Idiomatic interference: this category comprises improper translations of idioms "that the translator either did not perceive or misread as a collocation."
4. Interference in collocation: is similar to semantic interference in that it affects collocations rather than individual words.
5. Cultural interference: when a translator is unable to deal with the cultural differences between the source and target languages.

Additionally, Aixelá (2009) classifies interference into four categories; lexical interference, syntactic interference, cultural interference (proper nouns included), and structural or pragmatic interference. Aixelá goes on to assert that interference "includes the importation, whether intentional or not, of literal or modified foreign words and phrases (lexical interference), forms (syntactic interference), specific cultural items (cultural interference, proper nouns included), or genre conventions (structural or pragmatic interference)" (Aixelá 2009, p. 75). His perspective on interference differs slightly from that of others, such as

Thorovský (2009, p. 86) who considers interference as the inadvertent transfer of some elements of the source language (SL) to the target language (TL)."

Regarding the level of words, lexical interference occurs. Interferences generated by inaccurate or inappropriate direct translation of a notion are the most common. According to Havlásková (2010), there are four types of lexical interference. When it comes to lexical interference, the first thing that springs to mind for most people is undoubtedly false friends (also called false cognates or faux amis). Undoubtedly, this can be considered one of the most distinct lexical interferences. The second sort of lexical interference is mistakes that occur when students fail to consider the polysemous nature of a word and make an unsuitable choice from all of the alternative meanings. The lack of articulating an idea using additional words in the lexicon is the third lexical property that generates interferences on this level. The last subcategory of lexical interference is the case of a literal translation of an idiom or a collocation.

2.3 Empirical Studies

In the field of linguistics, some research conducted relates to linguistics interference.

Havlásková (2010) studied interference in students' translations. The researcher employed a translation exam that consisted of six texts provided to students for translation in two courses: developing Translation Skills and Text and Discourse Analysis as weekly homework, three texts each course. Seventy-seven translations were examined and tables were created. Students were asked to fill out a survey about their opinions on interference. They completed it in an incognito and on-the-spot manner. The findings revealed a variety of, typographical, grammatical, lexical, and syntactic types of interference among students' translation. Syntactic and lexical interferences were the most common. Despite this, 74 percent of students said syntactic interference was the most common form based on their responses to the questionnaires. On the other hand, they considered lexical interference to be the most serious. According to the findings of both instruments, even though students perceive interference, it leads to several challenges, particularly at syntax and lexis levels.

Azzouz (2013) worked on analyzing and measuring the Syrian students' lexical interference using texts, questionnaires and compositions. The findings of his study showed that the factors of this linguistic problem are due to the linguistic differences between Arabic and English, lack of interaction with the environment which provides students with English language practice and the students' weakness in language skills.

Alhihi (2015) investigated lexical issues in English to Arabic translation in Australian health texts. Five professionally translated documents were chosen at random to see if there were any lexical problems. Additions, omissions, compounds, synonyms, collocations, and inconsistencies are all examples of errors. The findings support the premise that both professional translators and English Language majors make lexical errors.

Galvao (2019) investigated linguistic interference in the translated academic test. Fifty abstracts were gathered from SciELO. Originally, they were written in English. After a comparative study Galvao found that the phenomena happen due to literal translation and lack of fluency when translating from L1 into L2.

Harhash (2021) investigated the difficulties that face translators in translating Arabic collocations into English in literary work, he also investigated adequate strategies and suggested some solutions to avoid this problem. The results showed that meaning was lost in translating Arabic collocations into English. As such, translators resort to different translation strategies, one of which is transliteration. In addition, misunderstanding of the SL collocations fails to intend the meaning also carelessness is another meaning. He also found that carelessness is a reason for translation problems.

The previous studies discussed the lexical interference difficulties that the students from different backgrounds and academic levels committed lexical interference in their English written work such as essays, compositions, English practices and answers to English tests. To the best of our knowledge, a few studies investigated undergraduate students' lexical interference in translated texts from Arabic into English where Arabic is the first language of the students.

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study encompasses all English major undergraduate students at Jordanian universities. Due to the inability to reach all participants, a purposive sample of fifty male and female students were selected from the English language and literature and applied translation programs at a private university in Jordan. These participants were selected according to one

criterion. That is they should have already completed at least two translation courses. The demographic data includes gender, age, and the number of years living in an English-speaking country and language background.

3.3 Instrument of the Study

A translation test was designed and distributed to explore the lexical interference problems that English major undergraduate students in Jordanian universities encounter when translating Arabic texts into English.

The test consisted of 19 Arabic lexical items to be translated into English. The students were allowed to use any resources to check the meaning of any item. Later, the test items were categorized into six categories: collocations, synonyms, metaphors, polysemy, prepositions, and redundancy. These expressions were extracted from different religious, social, political and geographical texts. Fifty copies of the test were distributed to the students along with a cover letter.

The participants' responses were considered correct if the meaning of the translation was transferred adequately by choosing the correct equivalence in the target language. Whereas the responses were considered wrong if the meaning of the translation was transferred literally or lost meaning by choosing wrong word choices.

The validity of the test was attained by requesting the validation committee in linguistics and translation to read the test and comment on the suitability of its form and content. When the test was ready, it was given to five professors of linguistics and translation to ensure the validity of the text. They were requested to comment on the test and to modify the items if needed to achieve the objectives of the study.

Regarding reliability, it was measured through test-retest. Ten students who were excluded from the sample but had the same characteristics as the population were asked to translate the test items. After two weeks, the same students were requested to take the test again to measure the consistency of the results, the responses were compared and the results were stable.

3.4 Data Analysis

This research adopts a mixed method in which quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted.

The 50 participants were requested to translate 19 items from Arabic into English. The students were encouraged to use a wide range of resources such as dictionaries and translation websites. The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The participants' responses were analyzed and categorized according to the problems encountered during the process of translation. Simple descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to uncover the lexical interference problems.

The qualitative analysis was conducted with a special focus on how the translators' mother tongue influenced transferring the meaning of their translation from SL into TL as well as the sources behind the emerging problems.

4. Results

4.1 Results Related to the Research Question

This section mainly reports the findings of this study as follows: firstly, it clearly shows the general findings regarding the ranking of the categories that the test included. Next, it elaborates on the participants' responses according to these categories. However, the translation test aims to deeply explore the potential lexical interference problems that undergraduate students encounter when translating from Arabic into English. A quick quantification of the participants' translations revealed that lexical interference occurred in all categories. The percentages of correct (i.e. lexical transference free) and wrong (i.e. lexical interference occurred) responses are reported in Figure 1.

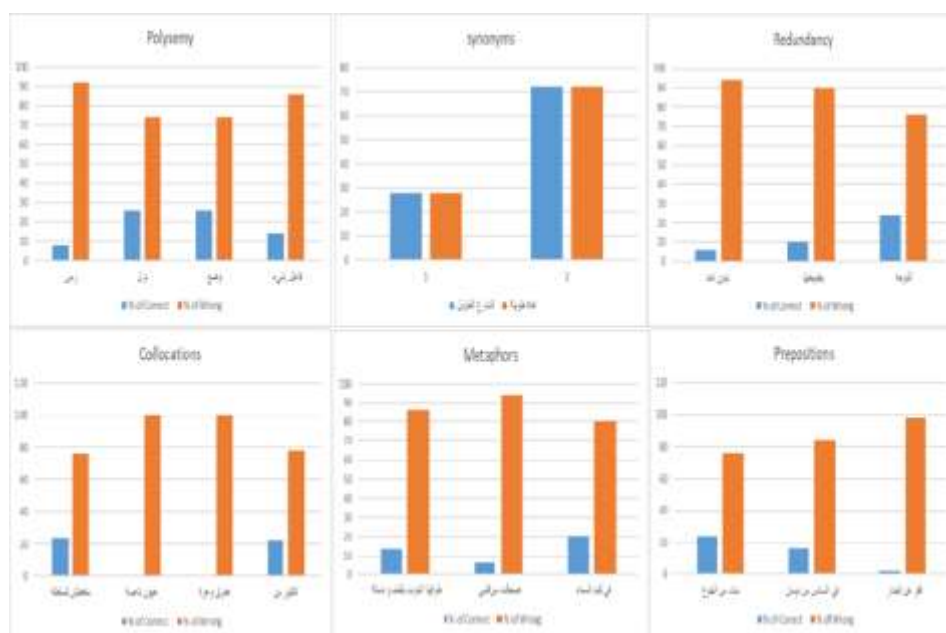


Figure 1. Percentages of correct and wrong responses.

As shown in Figure 1, the collocation category got the least correct responses. Therefore, this is an obvious indicator that the vast majority of the students encountered problems when translating collocations.

Clearly, the respondents' error percentages showed the weakness degree of every category. Accordingly, figure 1 is an indicator of the fields where students profoundly encountered the problem of lexical interference the most. Additionally, polysemy got the highest correct responses so this is an indicator that the students encountered the least problems in this category when they transferred ST into TT.

4.1.1 Synonyms

Synonyms can be defined as "two or more forms, with very closely meanings which are often, but not always, intersubstitutable in sentences." The discussion about the idea of synonyms does not mean a "total sameness" of meaning among them, some synonyms occasionally are appropriate in a sentence "but its synonym would be odd." (Yule, 1985, p. 95) Recently, the congruity in sense of meaning between TL and SL raised up to achieve a better meaning. Some students chose the nearest equivalent which offers the same meaning of TT leading to a wrong choice and wrong meaning of the translated text.

The test presented two items:

- 1- لقد عبرت الشارع الطويل
- 2- لقد رسمت صورة لفتاة طويلة وجميلة

The adjective طويل in the Arabic Language which is "ذو الطول" (Al Munjid, 1986, p. 476) means the description of the length of something or someone. However, the word طويل in English has two equivalents which are 'tall' and 'long'. In English, they do not have the same meaning identically, each one of them has a special meaning. "Tall" means "long from bottom to top" (Merriam-Webster, 2022) and "long" means "extending for a considerable distance" (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

To a considerable extent, students need to be very aware of these differences in meaning. Depending on the meaning of tall and long as mentioned, long is used with non-human whereas tall is used with human beings. In translation, the correct TL equivalent can be chosen according to the meaning of SL within a context since the Arabic adjective is used with both human and non-human.

The received translation showed that most of the respondents, conflated between these two adjectives in English translation 'long and tall' as in

- 1- I crossed the tall road. (72%)
- 2- I drew a picture of a long beautiful girl. (72%)

As a result, a lack of awareness of the distinction of synonyms 'meaning between Arabic and English language profoundly caused this lexical interference. On the other hand, some of the respondents provided adequate translations such as:

1. I crossed the long street. (28%)
2. I drew a picture of a tall and beautiful lady. (28%)

4.1.2 Polysemy

Yule (1985) clearly states that polysemy is "one form (written or spoken) that has meanings which are all related by extension" (p. 97). He adds that if a word is polysemous, it has one entry in a dictionary followed by different meanings. From this, polysemous words can be defined as one lexeme which carries multiple meanings. Therefore, polysemous words present different meanings regarding separated situations. Accordingly, every single polysemous word must be "learnt separately to be understood." (Mohammad, 2009, p. 3). Polysemy carries metaphorical meaning, therefore it profoundly indicates a lexical ambiguity dimension especially when there are no verbal or non-verbal elements to remove meaning ambiguity and clarify the meaning of the polysemous words; adding non-verbal elements to the target text or verbal elements to interpretations helps the receivers of the target language to understand the meaning of the target words through analyzing the relation between the elements and the target words in a context so this helps the target readers to understand the transferred meaning of the target words through the contextual meaning which remove the ambiguity of the target words.

Some students make mistakes due to the students' inability to understand the different related meanings that a lexical item may have. Therefore, they misread the meaning in ST and conveyed this wrong understanding to the TT using the wrong word choices.

In this study, the translation test included three examples of polysemy. The first example was:

1- رمى صاحبه بالكذب

The word رمى had different meanings in the Arabic language such as 'throw', 'accuse', 'aim' and 'hit' but the absolute meaning was achieved by translating the word within its contextual meaning. Here the verb رمى meant 'to accuse someone' because it contextually matched the word بالكذب; the collocation between these two Arabic words changed the denotative meaning of the word "رمى" from "to throw something" to the meaning which was "to accuse someone". Thus, the English equivalent of the Arabic sentence "رمى صاحبه بالكذب" was: "He accused his friend of lying". The received translation tests showed that the vast majority of the respondents, 92%, used its denotative meaning 'threw away and hit' out of context or by choosing the first dictionary entry they encountered when they looked it up in the dictionary as in

- a- He hit his friend with lies.
- b- He threw his friend by lying.

Another possibility was the students' reliance on the literal translation of the items, which was provided by machine translation services such as Google Translation. Some of the respondents, 8% provided adequate translations such as:
He accused his friend of lying.

Another example was:

2- نزل الى البحر

The action verb نزل presented two different meanings in the Arabic language which were 'to descend' and 'to go down'. In this item, the word meant to go or visit. This multiplication in the meaning of the same word between two different languages emphatically led to lexical interference due to translating the word out of context or the students' lack of awareness of the SL different meanings. Most of the students 74% committed this error as the following:

He descended to the sea.
Conversely, some of the respondents, 26% provided adequate translations such as:

He went down to the sea or he went to the sea.
The third example was:

3- "اني وضعتها انثى"

In Arabic, the verb وضع had the denotative meaning "to put something aside or down" but also had different connotations such as: "to wear something" and "give birth" within different contexts. Many students tended to use the literal meaning of the word which is "to put something aside or down" and this led to wrong meaning transferring due to translating it out of context.

Some students committed errors in transferring the meaning due to a lack of knowledge of the connotations of the source language word within its original context. The majority 74% committed this error as the following:

I put a baby.
Conversely, some of the respondents, 26 % provided adequate translations such as:
She delivered a female baby.
The fourth example is:

4- "ولا تقولن لشيء إني فاعلٌ ذلك غداً"

This item included two problematic expressions, فاعل and شيء. The word فاعل presented the meaning of someone who did or initiated an action. The participants used the word "فاعل" as "subject" but it did not mean subject in this context. Structurally, فاعل was preceded by إني. In Arabic, it is one of the letters of emphasis that is similar to the actions that presents the meaning of an action and comes before the noun and makes it an action thus the meaning of the word "subject" turned from its denotative meaning to a new connotation which was "I will do". Unquestionably, the lexical interference here occurred due to literal translation. They rendered the meaning of فاعل out of context which greatly caused wrong meaning transferring. Accordingly, the students needed to understand the words within a context so easily they could choose the adequate equivalent. Moreover, the students needed to understand the connotations of SL word within the SL context not to translate it using its denotation.

The other word, شيء carried the denotative meaning of "something", but in this item, the adequate translation was "it" or "that".

On one hand, some of the respondents, 14 % provided adequate translations which indicated that some of the students' respondents corresponded to the official translations of the Qur'an, which means that few of them looked for an appropriate translation such as:

"Indeed, I will do that tomorrow,"

On the other hand, the majority of the students, 86% literally translated and did not take into consideration the context and the deep meaning instead of the superficial as the following:

Do not say to something, I am the doer of it tomorrow.

4.1.3 Redundancy

Generally speaking, redundancy is an Arabic writing style which repeats some words to strongly emphasize certain ideas whereas this repetition weakens the English language argumentation. Redundancy is defined as: "wordiness [...] or unnecessary repetition in expressing ideas" (Shunnaq, 2006, p. 238). This repetition is considered one of the problems that not only language learners encounter, but also translators as well. Such a kind of interlingual interference occurs mainly when the translator copies features from SL into the TL. The respondents, who fell into the redundancy trap, clearly resorted to 'literal translation' instead of using, for example, communicative equivalents.

In this study, the translation test included three examples of redundancy. The first example was:

1- تسكن منى لوحدها في المنزل بدون أحد.

This sentence included two expressions that give the same information 'لوحدها' and 'بدون أحد'. Even though this kind of repetition was marked [i.e. usual] in Arabic, it was unmarked in English. In this case, the students split the sentence into small parts and translated them into small pieces which led to literal translation and was considered an indicator of the lack of

recognizing L2 linguistic features. The received translation tests showed that most of the respondents in item 1, 94%, used the words 'without anyone' or 'with no one' as in:

- a- Mona lives alone in the house without anyone.
- b- Mona lives alone in the house with no one.

In so doing, they were heavily relying on their L1 linguistic knowledge by applying the Arabic style when writing the English sentence. On the other hand, some of the respondents, 8 % provided adequate translations such as:

Mona lives alone.

The second example was

2- تعتبر المشكلة جادة جداً بطبيعتها

The word بطبيعتها split into two parts; بطبيعة and ها. Transferring the two parts from Arabic into English was considered inadequate because the Arabic letter ها was an essential component of the Arabic word "بطبيعتها" and it delivered a meaning of emphasizing. However, it was redundant in English and it had no meaning in the TL although this repetition seemed acceptable in the SL. If the students rendered بطبيعتها in English as "in nature", this would be meaningful in English.

The majority of the respondents, 90 % used the word 'its nature' to translate the item literally as it is in their mother tongue as the following:

The problem is very serious in its nature.

In addition, some respondents 10% considered the word ها as redundant and tended to omit this part, in parallel some of them intentionally tended to remove the whole Arabic word بطبيعتها which is true too as the following:

- a- The problem is very serious.
- b- The problem is very serious in nature.

The third example was:

3- ذهب أخي إلى الدوحة

The Participants used the definite article 'the' before proper nouns but this kind of redundant, was not acceptable grammatically in English. Moreover, the use of 'the' before proper nouns emphatically led to a lexical problem. In English, the definite article 'the' does not come before proper nouns. Murphy (2004, p.154) stated that: "the" is not used "with names of places."

Most of the received translations clearly showed that 76% of the participants used "the" before the proper noun (Doha) because they copied the use of the definite article 'ال' from their mother tongue to English as follows:

My brother went to the Doha.

Some of the students, 24% translated the item adequately as the following:

My brother went to Doha.

4.1.4 Collocations

Collocations can be defined as: "how words go together, i.e. which words may occur in constructions with which other words" (Larson, 1984, p. 141). A collocation is a lexical relationship between two words. Newmark (1988, p. 114-116) defines the collocation's categories as the following: "adjective plus noun", "noun plus noun", and "verb plus object" to form a semantic word, but there are no certain constraints to adequately determine the combination of words. According to Palmer (1986), collocation is: "idiosyncratic", that is, the meaning of the associated words cannot be predictable. Therefore, translators may encounter problems in transferring the meaning of collocations from TL to SL.

In this study, the translation test included 4 examples of collocations, the first example was:

1- تعلم قوات التحالف أنها تتعامل مع دكتاتور متعطش للسلطة.

The students opted for translating the word combination "متعطش للسلطة" literally as it is in their mother tongue, they kept the same structure (n+n) and transferred the meaning of each word literally and solely. In this case, the students applied word-for-word translation which delivered unacceptable meaning of the SL receivers.

Figure 1 clearly showed that the majority of the students, 76 % rendered Arabic collocation into English inadequately as the following:

Allied forces know that they are dealing with a power-thirsty dictator.

Conversely, 24% of the students transferred the meaning correctly with no lexical interference problems.

The Allied Nations forces know that they are dealing with a power-hungry dictator.

There was another example of literal translation:

2- العيون الناعسة هي الخجولة التي لاخبت فيها ولادها ولاغباء ، تعبر عن الإستسلام والرضوخ والطيبة.

In Item 11, the word الناعسة carried the meaning of being sleepy, but actually, in English the used word was different which was "heavy". This word was unpredictable for Arab students because it presented a meaning of measurement in their language. Additionally, finding an English equivalence of the Arabic collocation structure (n+adj.) certainly posed a problem for the students. All the students, 100% used the wrong word choice. They tended to apply word-for-word translation. On one hand, the following sentence showed the students' translation:

The sleepy eyes

On the other hand, the adequate L2 equivalent was "heavy eyes" as the following where none of the students transferred it from L1 into the suitable L2 equivalence.

Heavy eyes are shy, in which there is no malice, no stupidity, which expresses surrender, submission and kindness.

A new example of translation of Arabic collocation into English was:

3- تعتبر هذه السيارة مثالية للقيادة في الطرق الوعرة.

The students' goal of translation collocations was to find adequate equivalence in L2. In this item, the word وعرة exactly describes the road which is unpaved and full of dugs. In this regard, it was easy to maintain the same structure (noun + adjective) and translate it literally from ST into TT, the students tended to use the nearest synonymous collocation to the meaning of L1 but this did not mean that the transferred meaning was acceptable or it presented the tended meaning. Noticeably, the adequate equivalence in TL was heavy roads and no matching in meaning between the two words heavy (TL) and وعرة (SL).

All the students, 100% used the wrong word choice because they employed the synonymous equivalent of each word solely which superficially appeared as if it delivered the tended meaning as the following:

This car is considered ideal for driving in bumpy roads/ off-roads /tough roads.

Conversely, none of the students rendered the meaning correctly as the following:

This car is ideal for heavy roads.

One more item clearly showed the lexical interference in the translation of Arabic collocations into English:

4- إنه فتى مشاغب دائما يقوم بعمل الكثير من الأخطاء.

The word الأخطاء in Arabic collocated with "يعمل" which means 'do' or 'make' in English. This seemed to create a problem for the majority of the participants (78%) as the word 'mistake' collocated with make in English. Therefore, the participants tended to use the verb 'do' under the influence of their L1.

He is a naughty boy he always does many mistakes.

Only 22% of them rendered it correctly by using the verb 'make' as in

He is a naughty boy; he always makes a lot of mistakes.

4.1.5 Prepositions

There are many differences in using prepositions between Arabic and English. The prepositions of English pose problems for the speakers of Arabic if the speakers of Arabic are not familiar with the meanings of English prepositions. Regarding the Arabic-

English lexical interference, it is seldom that a student can find "a one-to-one correspondence between English and Arabic. An Arabic preposition may be translated by several English prepositions while an English usage may have several Arabic translations." (Hamdallah & Tushyeh, 1993, p.186). Furthermore, some adverbs in Arabic language are used as prepositions; such as: *khalfa*(behind), *amam*(in front), *bayna* (between). As a result, not every Arabic and English preposition has a definite equivalence in meaning. Therefore, some students make lexical errors by using wrong words.

The test included three items of prepositions. The first example was:

1- قفز الشاب عن الجدار

Some students' translations included wrong substitution; the weakness of Arabic linguistic ability was a result of using slang in daily life spoken language instead of formal or written. Arab students understood the meaning of prepositions in a wrong way. Therefore, misunderstanding Arabic prepositions led to wrong word choices. In slang, they used *على الجدار* but in formal they used *عن* so they overlapped between the meanings of these two prepositions which led to the use of a wrong substitution in TL which is 'on'.

The results of Figure 1 pointed out that most of the students' answers 98 % indicated that Arabic-English lexical interference occurred as follows:

The young man jumped on /off the wall.

Additionally, some students, 2% achieved the adequate translation in the received answers as the following:

The young man jumped over the wall.

One more example states the problem of this study:

2- لقد ظن الجيران أن زوجي مات من الجوع لكنهم لا يعرفون أنه كان بخيلاً جداً.

The second item showed that *من* literally translated into 'from' where as the correct substitution was 'of'.

The received responses showed that most of the students 76% committed wrong substitution as in the following:

died from hunger

The received responses showed that some of the students 24 % translated the item correctly as the following:

died of hunger

Another example was:

3- في السادس من نيسان عام 1985

The complexity or ambiguity in conducting a date structurally and lexically in the English language posed a deadly serious problem for the students. Therefore, the students tended to translate the date literally to maintain the lexical meaning. Accordingly, the students overlapped between *in* and *on* prepositions, they used *in* to transfer the meaning instead of *on* because *on* did not make sense in meaning depending on their mother tongue but the meaning of it made sense to them so they did not know there was a special way of conducting a date in English structurally and lexically, therefore they tended to conduct it the same in their mother tongue.

The percentage of the students who translated the item incorrectly is 84%, this means most of them committed this error:

in the 6th April 1985

Furthermore, 16% of the students translated the item correctly as follows:

On April, 6

4.1.6 Metaphors

In all languages, metaphors present an aesthetic part of the language and they also present a figurative meaning. They have an "inherent second-order nature, a metaphor can only be recognized as such precisely because of its contrast with non-metaphorical expressions." (Taverniers, 2006, p. 9). The figurative meaning and the literal meaning of the metaphor poses a serious problem in translation. The tension occurs between a transferred meaning on one hand and a literal meaning on the other hand.

The translation test presented three examples of metaphors. The first item was:

1- لما حتم القضاء طرقها الموت بلطفٍ و دماثة.

Originally, the word طرقها meant to pass. The students understood it incorrectly within the context of their mother tongue. Therefore, they transferred the meaning using a wrong word choice. The students translated it using the superficial meaning which was someone who hit someone or something on one hand as the following:

The death hits her gently.

The students understood the figurative meaning of the metaphor but they chose wrong word substitution in TL which caused a loss in the meaning of the metaphor as the following:

The death took her gently.

As shown in Figure 1, most of the students 86% committed lexical errors in the translation of the targeted item as clarified above.

While some students, 14 % recognized the meaning of the word within the Arabic context (ST) adequately they translated it as the following:

When destiny called she died peacefully.

One more example showed lexical interference.

2- كنت أستمع إلى حديث طفلين حول مغامراتهما في المدرسة فضحكتُ من قلبي لبراءة الأطفال.

It was an obvious example of overlapping between grammatical metaphors and lexical metaphors. This expression profoundly carried the meaning of joy or entertainment which showed a hearty laugh. The students here sought to maintain the structure to transfer the tended meaning, they translated it literally following the Arabic structure, by contrast, the meaning transferred inadequately because they ignored the lexical metaphoric part of the Arabic phrase.

94 % of the respondents translated it literally as the following:

Laughed from my heart

Some of the students transferred the lexical meaning of the metaphor adequately, 6 % as the following:

I was listening to two kids talking about their adventures at school, and I laughed heartily at the innocence of the kids.

The third example was:

3- عندما تكون الشمس في كبد السماء ينتهي وقت صلاة الضحى.

The students did not understand the figurative meaning of the metaphor in their original language so the students rendered the meaning inadequately by resorting to word-for-word translation.

Most of the students, 80 % rendered the meaning using transliteration as the following:

When the sun rises in the liver of the sky

Some of the students translated the text adequately, 20% as the following:

a-When the sun rises in the middle of the sky.

b-Just before the sun passes its zenith.

5. Discussion

The instrument section of the study outlined the categorization of test items into six categories: collocations, synonyms, metaphors, polysemy, prepositions, and redundancy. Based on this, the problems that the students encountered when translated from Arabic into English were categorized into six categories that were collocation, synonyms, polysemy, metaphor, redundancy, and prepositions.

The results of the analysis showed that 74% of lexical interference in synonyms occurred in the received translation. Some students chose the nearest equivalent which offers the same meaning of ST, leading to a wrong choice and wrong meaning of the translated text. As such, the students rendered the meaning of the word طويل from Arabic into English without paying

attention to the distinctive meaning of them in the target language. In this regard, Diab (1996) stated that the majority of mistakes were made when students thought Arabic and English were comparable, but fewer mistakes were made when there were evident differences between the two languages.

Regarding Figure 1, Polysemy generally presented different connotations for the same word in different texts. Some students relied on the denotative meaning of a word to translate the word from SL into TL regardless of the text. Therefore, they transferred the meaning in a wrong way. The word "رمى" had different connotations in different texts. The students chose one of these meanings without considering the connotative meaning of the word within the context. This misunderstanding of the contextual meaning of a word within a context led to a loss in the transferred meaning from SL into TL.

Depending on the results of redundancy, the students repeated words in the target text which were meaningless. This lexical feature was part of the Arabic linguistics and the students applied this feature on TT in the English language. Emphatically, this overlap between the linguistic features of Arabic and English languages led the students to copy the word "بطبيعتها" as its nature as a result they translated it literally. This result corresponded to the findings of Galvao (2019) who found the respondents' reliance on literal translation created interference problems which in turn more or less distort the meaning of the ST.

As it was shown in the analysis of the results of collocation in Figure 1, the students recognized collocations as free word combinations in transferring the meaning. They separated the building structure of the collocation into single separated words then they transferred the meaning of them which normally led to literal translation while the meaning of the collocation goes together. Apparently, "الطرق الوعرة" meant roads that are full of dugs but separately every word presented a different meaning therefore the equivalence in TL was unexpected "heavy roads". Noticeably, the students translated it as they acquired its meaning in Arabic which caused copying of the Arabic lexical meaning and structure to English which was considered thinking Arabic translation. They heavily tended to think of a one-to-one correspondence while finding a direct equivalence was unreal because the collocations presented figurative meaning. These results match Harhash's (2019) findings that: "It requires an accurate understanding and awareness of their basic function in the ST" (p.1016) due to cultural and religious differences between Arabic and English. It was difficult to find the same equivalence so rendering an adequate equivalence, students should reproduce the collocations in a different culture and style than the SL. "Many Arabic collocations are translated and reproduced in the English version using different structures and different styles." (Harhash, 2019, p.1014)

As a result of the students' test analysis, the students resorted to looking for one-to-one equivalence whereas English and Arabic prepositions were variant also they were different in use and usage. As in the item, "مات من الجوع" the students relied on their mother tongue to transfer the meaning regardless of the distinction between the two languages. Therefore, the students rendered the meaning of the preposition literally as "died from hunger". They also rendered the meaning of عن using the wrong substitution because they misinterpreted in Arabic. As a result, the students transferred the meaning using wrong word choices due to the influence of L1 which caused this lexical interference. This result goes with Satti Hamad and Yassins' findings (2015) in which they investigated lexical errors and their great impact on university students' writings. They found that the lexical errors occurred due to the influence of the mother tongue on their L2 writing. According to the findings, the errors were characterized as word choice, transliteration, omission, misspelling, and redundancy.

Regarding the discussed lexical problems in metaphor previously, the students lost transferring the figurative meaning of metaphors. Unquestionably, they rendered the meaning literally. They did not comprehend its figurative meaning within the Arabic context. Therefore, they tended to translate every word literally and separately in the case of "في كبد السماء", they rendered the meaning as in the liver of the sky whereas this is no liver of the sky, it was a figurative meaning of the "middle of the sky". These findings agreed with Galvao (2019). The researcher found that the phenomena happened due to literal translation and lack of fluency when translating from ST into TT.

6. Conclusion

This study sought to explore the lexical interference problems that English major undergraduate students in Jordanian universities may commit when translating Arabic texts into English. The study also identified lexical interference and discussed it in the light of translation. In light of the results, the lexical errors were categorized into six categories which are polysemy, synonyms, collocations, metaphors, redundancy, and prepositions. The results also showed different error percentages. To this end, holding an efficiency exam for the students, preparing special intensive reading skill for school and post-graduated students and paying more attention to language interference when teaching translation courses are highly recommended.

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Appendix C

Cover Letter

Dear participant,

I am Aseel Ziad Hudaib, a graduate student at the Department of English language and literature, at the Middle East University, Amman – Jordan. I am conducting the study titled “**Lexical Interference Problems that Undergraduate Students Majoring in English Encounter when Translating Arabic Texts into English**

”, as a partial requirement for obtaining the Masters' degree in English language and literature.

You are kindly requested to answer this translation test by translating 20 sentences from Arabic into English. **Your name and personal details will not be used in the thesis. Your acceptance to take part in this study will be in the form of taking the test.**

I would like to express my gratitude in advance for your time and the efforts exerted in contributing to this academic work.

Thanks in advance,

Demographical information

A) Answer these questions:

1. What is your gender? (a) male (b) female
2. What are your nationality/nationalities?

3. How many years did live in an English country?
4. What are the languages you can speak?
- B) Translate the sentences from Arabic into English.

1-لقد عبرت الشارع الطويل.

2-لقد رسمت صورة لفتاة طويلة وجميلة.

3-زمتى صاحبة بالكذب.

4 - نزل الأولاد إلى البحر و لعبوا ألعاباً مسلية.

5-"إني وضعتها انثى"

6 -" ولا تقولن لشيء إني فاعلٌ ذلك غداً"

7-تسكن منى لوحدها في المنزل بدون أحدٍ.

8-تعتبر المشكلة جادة جداً بطبيعتها .

9-ذهب أخي إلى الدوحة.

10-تعلم قوات التحالف أنها تتعامل مع دكتاتور متعطش للسلطة.

11-العيون الناعسة هي الخجولة التي لاختب فيها ولادها ولاغباء ، تعبر عن الإستسلام والرضوخ والطيبة.

12-تعتبر هذه السيارة مثالية للقيادة في الطرق الوعرة.

13-إنه فتى مشاغب دائما يقوم بعمل الكثير من الأخطاء.

14-لقد ظن الجيران أن زوجي مات من الجوع لكنهم لا يعرفون أنه كان بخيلاً جداً.

15- في السادس من ابريل عام 1985 قام الشعب السوداني بإطاحة الرئيس جعفر النيمري

16 -قفز الشاب عن الجدار

17-لما حتم القضاء طرقها الموت بلطفٍ و دماثة.

18-كنت أستمع إلى حديث طفلين حول مغامراتهما في المدرسة فضحكْتُ من قلبي لبراءة الأطفال.

19- عندما تشرق الشمس في كبد السماء ينتهي وقت صلاة الضحى