False Friends: a Problem Encountered in Translation

The case of 3rd year students of Translation at Mentouri University

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for Master Degree in Applied

Language Studies

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DEDICATION

To all my family with love

To my dearest cousin Imene

To my best friends Lamia, Houssem-eddine, Wided & Amina

To my colleagues Amina and Selma

To all my teachers

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study is a qualitative and quantitative investigation accomplished to afford an illustration about the difficulties met by third-year students in the Department of Translation, Mentouri University, Constantine, when they translate from French into English. It aims at highlighting the aberrations resulted from mutual lexical items in both languages, i.e. finding out the extent of the anomalies that result from the concept of false friends. The research data were gathered through a questionnaire and a translation test to check the hypothesis of this study which is: if translation learners identify the similarities and the differences between the source language and the target language they can avoid language transfer and the trap of false friends. After the treatment of the observed errors, the results reveal that false friends which stem from the linguistic reciprocality and students ignorance about them constitute a critical problem for the learners. On the basis of the results obtained, some recommendations are suggested to teachers and learners of Translation to handle such problem.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ST: Source Text

TT: Target Text

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CHAPTER TWO: THE OUTCOME OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

When two languages come into contact with each other because of many reasons they typically interact and influence each other. Consequently, it leads to the occurrence of different linguistic interferences then to language borrowing. This phenomenon was evident during the 18th and 19th centuries; it resulted in an exaggerated fear of language corruption (O'Neill and Casanovas, 1994: 106). The linguistic deep impact that French exerted on English "during the occupation period which followed the Norman Conquest in 1066" (Hatch and Brown, 1995: 170) is one example. The result was the borrowing of a substantial amount of words from French into English vocabulary. Therefore, lexical resemblances between the two languages took place. These resemblances are the root of some problems in translation and lead to the occurrence of errors in foreign language learners' production.

The investigation of the problem of 'error', which is a fundamental issue in language teaching and language learning, has already attracted many applied linguists (Van Els et al, 1984) (Cited in: Drid, 2003: 2). They attempted to find reliable solutions to the recurrent errors in the production of foreign language learners. Error analysis served as a tool to access and measure these errors, since it is considered as the identification, classification, explanation and evaluation of the ill-formed structures with reference to the norms of the target language (Ellis, 1985:52).

When applied linguists attempted to identify the root of errors in translation, they found that false friends or faux amis belong to one of the most significant areas of difficulties met by learners in their translation. According to Mounin et al, the term faux amis was first used by Koessler and Derocquigny (1974). He said that faux amis

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"désigne les mots partiellement ou totalement différents" (Mounin et al, 1974 : 139).

1. Statement of the Problem

Learners of foreign languages may draw on their previous knowledge, especially if the source language and the target language contain many similarities. In translation, many of them fall in the trap of false friends because of this reliance. According to Lado's scale of difficulty, they occupy the highest position and he described them as "sure-fire trap" (1957: 84). Therefore, false friends hinder the learners' adequate translation and errors become inevitable.

Since this study investigates the problems caused by false friends in translation, it turns around two main questions that can be stated as follows: Do false friends and the lack of the identification between the similarities and differences between French and English drive 3rd year student of translation at the Department of Translation to error? Does language transfer have any role in the deceptive translation of these students?

2. Aim of the Study

The present study aims at casting light on the significant problems that false friends constitute mainly in translation, so that it might provide the teachers and learners of both Translation and English with some insights to handle the difficulties and avoid errors engendering from them.

As errors in translation do cause obscurity of meaning and mislead the reader, it is worthy then to investigate this problem and describe the difficulties it poses.

Therefore, this study may attract learners' attention to avoid the inappropriate translation.

3. Hypothesis

Since language transfer has long been considered the sole source of language errors (Dulay and Burt, 1972: 105-06), we hypothesize that if translation learners identify the similarities and the differences between the source language and the target language they can avoid language transfer and the trap of false friends.

4. Tools of Research

In order to obtain data, a pilot study will be conducted using a group of third year students chosen at random. The participants of this sample will be asked to answer a questionnaire to determine their skill in both French and English. Then, they will be asked to translate some sentences from French into English. These sentences contain a number of false friends; and the participants will be evaluated according to their translation and behaviour towards such vocabulary.

After being collected, the necessary data for the research will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to clarify more the problems that false friends prevail in translation.

5. Structure of the Dissertation

The present study comprises two chapters. The first chapter consists of two sections; the first one gives an overall account of translation, contrastive analysis, error analysis and language transfer, whereas the second tackles the concept of false

friends as an outstanding issue in translation. The second chapter presents an analysis of the learners' answers in the questionnaire and their translation' errors, taking into account the targeted items only and not their translation strategies. All the observed errors are described, tabulated and quantified. This chapter, before being rounded off, will propose some recommendations to deal with such deceptive vocabulary.

CHAPTER ONE

TRANSLATION AND FALSE FRIENDS

Introduction

This chapter is a review of literature about false friends and the pertinent complexity they cause in translation. First, some definitions presented by many linguists regarding the translating activity will be examined. Second, a brief definition of equivalence and its effectiveness in translation will be introduced. After that, this chapter will deal with both contrastive analysis and error analysis and the significance of their results as a remedy to errors occurring in translation. Third, a definition of language transfer with its two types will be presented. Finally, the concept of "false friends" as a problem encountered by the polyglot learners in their translation will be envisaged. This problem will be considered from many aspects: definition, formation, and typology.

1.1. Definition of Translation

Translation is considered as a reasonable way of communication between different cultures and languages. Gerding-Salas underlined that "the main aim of translation is to serve as a cross-cultural bilingual communication vehicle among peoples" (2000: ¶1). It was defined by Nida and Taber as "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (1974:12). Catford, however, claims that "it is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another   language"   (1965:20).

Newmark (1988) supported the idea that translation is based on the importance of preserving the effect of the original text or the source text. He said that translation aims mainly at reaching an "equivalent effect" (ibid: 48). Yet, it would be difficult to achieve this between languages with considerable cultural differences. Hatem and Mason (1990: 61) assert that words in each language tend to have different meanings; as a result, one-to-one correspondence is rare between any two languages. To settle this difficulty, Newmark suggested a strategy called "cultural equivalent" (1988: 82-83). According to Baker, this strategy involves "replacing a cultural-specific item or expression with target language item which does not have the same propositional meaning" (1992: 30).

1. 2. Equivalence in Translation

Although linguists presented distinct definitions of translation, they all admit the indispensability of equivalence in translation. To illustrate more its importance, let us exploit the example presented by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) when they provided the reaction of an amateur who hits his fingers while hammering a nail: if he is French he would say "Aïe", and if he is English he would say "Ouch". According to them equivalence can lead to a successful translation especially that of idioms and proverbs since it "replicates the same situation as in the original while using completely different wording" (ibid: 52).

1. 3. The Relevance of Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis to Translation

1. 3. 1. Contrastive Analysis

The Contrastive Analysis hypothesis was developed in the 1950's out of linguists'

concern to solve a whole series of problems in the process of foreign language learning. It is concerned with the identification of the differences and similarities between two languages (Wikipedia, 2010: ¶1). It was thought previously that foreign language learning consisted primarily in learning the contrast between the mother tongue or any language acquired before and the target language. Nowadays, the two languages are contrasted to make it clear for the learners "where exactly the communication norms of L2 diverge from those of L1" (Titford, 1981:52). It has been used as a means of predicting the differences in learning a foreign language. As was stated by Rutherford, contrastive analysis has an impressive result when the student learns a language that is similar to another one he already knows (1987:16).

Titford (1981) and Edge (1986) pointed out that contrastive analysis was advocated via translation due to its numerous benefits because it enables the learner to relate an unknown language to another one he knows very well. As a result, he can be aware of the semantic distinction between the source and the target language, and therefore translates appropriately. However, this is too risky as students creating their own rules can lead to incorrect norms or over-generalizations and language transfer. In this respect, contrastive analysis provided an explanation to the errors made by foreign language learners claiming that most of them are the result of interference (Wikipedia, 2010: ¶4). As its explanation was incomplete and not all the errors made by the learners of foreign language are due to interference, another approach appeared to illuminate this field more.

1. 3. 2. Error Analysis

Error Analysis involves principally the study of a learner's performance by

emphasizing on errors in his production. Ellis defined it as "a set of procedures for identifying, describing, and explaining errors in the learner language" (1994: 70). In other words, Corder (1973) explained that error analysis is based on comparing the language produced by the learner at any particular point in his learning stages with the target language in order to find the errors' origins, to explain their causes and to identify a way to remedy these situations.

Since 'error' is considered as the kernel of error analysis and it turns around it, it is worthy to mention its definition. The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992) distinguished between and error and a mistake. On the one hand, it defined an error as a noticeable and repeated deviation from the language being learned. It stated that an error occurs because the learner ignores the rules of the language being learned; as a result, an error cannot be self-corrected. On the other hand, it claimed that a mistake is a result of lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness or some other aspects of performance and it can be self-corrected.

Error analysis has generally followed the same methodology in its investigation consisting of the following steps:

- Data collection;

- Errors identification;

- Error classification;

- Identification of the areas of difficulty in the target language;

- Remedy.

As a recap, contrastive analysis laid the burden on error analysis as a way to study

the difficulties encountered by foreign-language learners. They are both complementary to one another, in the sense that the results obtained and the predictions made by the contrastive analysis are to be investigated and corrected by the results obtained in error analysis. The findings of such studies can be very helpful in translation; nevertheless, they would be incomplete without the awareness of the deep level of semantic category.

1.4. Language Transfer in Translation

Language transfer or cross-linguistic influence as was stated by Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1986) is a torment phenomenon in language acquisition and language learning due to its delicacy and impedance. It is far more complex than hitherto believed. Selinker (1972) considers language transfer as one of the central processes to language learning. In 1989, Odlin defined transfer by including many different perspectives: "transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (p.27). Dulay, Burt & Krashen agreed that transfer refers to the way in which past knowledge and experience about language are used in the process of learning a new one; and because of its high frequency they added that it is an automatic, subliminal and frenzied application of the former skill in an attempt to produce responses in current situations (1982: 101).

When language transfer results in correct forms which are similar to the native ones, it is called positive transfer. This was strongly supported by Hammerly (1991: 69) when he stated:

> *The main effect of NL - SL closeness is to   aid*
> *comprehension through the presence of many*

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> *cognate words and similar structures. Even when a target language is taught inductively, this closeness facilitates learning and therefore production.*

In other cases, however, language transfer can be unfavorable when it does not facilitate the task; here, it is dealt with negative transfer as the second type of language transfer. In this sense, negative transfer occurs when the previous realization device does not fit the meaning of the target language.

Typology and psychotypology were underlined by Kellerman (1979) as two leading features that affect the occurrence language transfer. In other words, the probability of mutual lexical interference increases when two languages are typologically similar. Concerning psychotypology, Ringbom (1987) observed that:

> *It seems that the degree of difficulty of a foreign language for a learner will be largely determined, not by these two languages, but by how naturally the learner can and will establish equivalences between the languages at the initial stage of learning (p.60).*

Therefore, typological distance and learner's psychotypology can be considered as good boosters to fall into language transfer.

Language transfer may be an offspring of reference to other foreign languages known by the students or multilingual learners rather than native language. In his multicompetence model, Cook presented strong evidence about multilingualism. He claimed that languages known by the polyglot are concurrent in his mind as one system, which functions as whole and not each language functions separately, apart from the other (1992: 577). Consequently, the polyglot learner or translator, whose knowledge about the languages is imperfect, may be confused between the similarities

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and apply rules from one language in another one where they do not exist. Cook went on and stated that transfer is a "source of both code-breaking and decoding" (1992: 581). He defined code-breaking as the conceptualization of the experience about the learned language; and labelled code-decoding for the consumption of the conceptualized language in an objective (ibid).

1.5. Translation and the Concept of "False Friends"

It is doubtless that translation is not an easy task and the consequences of inadequate translation are terrible. This was explained by Delisle (1981), in Gerding-Salas article, when he described translation as "an arduous job that mortifies you, puts you in a state of despair" (2003: ¶5). Among the asserted issues that translators face in their tasks a major one which is vocabulary. This problem stems mostly from non-equivalence between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) and language transfer.

False friends, for instance, are a thorny problem that belongs to the category of vocabulary issues; therefore, it is not redundant to emphasize the necessity to verge on and deal with such unstoppably recurrent problem. First, it is important to be acquainted with the notion of false friends in order to provide an exhaustive and systematic treatment to them, so it is indefatigable to offer their definition and description.

When we speak about false friends, we are normally referring to words that share the same form and etymology but evolved in the midst of two languages and two different civilizations where they may acquire different meanings. In a similar vein, Chuquet and Paillard defined them as "mots qui sont, […] proches par la forme mais

partiellement ou totalement différent par le sens" (1989: 224). Besides the term of "false friends", they have others that have been used to describe this linguistic phenomenon such as false cognates, false pairs, false equivalents, deceptive words, deceptive cognates, treacherous twins and belles infidelles.

1.6. The Formation of False Friends

Kiss (2002) featured that, contrary to synonyms or paronyms, false friends are not innate in any language, but they are yielded in it. Thus, they should be considered first from an etymological perspective and second from a psychological one to envisage their formation.

1.6.1. Etymological Perspective

In this concern, Horea (2007: ¶5) pointed out that etymology is the first accountable for the linguistic confusion. Since language is not determined and steady, it can give and receive a variation of words during given periods and for different purposes. Hence, language borrowing is of a prime cause for the existence of false friends.

Generally, linguistic borrowers try to keep the same form of the borrowed word; however, as any linguistic sign, the foreign form tries to meet the requirements of its new system. Consequently, it is unavoidable that the borrowed word undergoes many modifications. In addition to the phonological and morphological changes, these modifications may include semantic ones. These mutations were specified by O'Neill and Casanovas as "reversion to [the] original sense, specialization, generalization, and the acquisition of new connotations" (1994: 107).

The probabilities of these adaptations have been classified by Kiss (2002) into four groups:

1. The loanword preserves the primeval sense while it is dropped in the original language. If we take the adjective "sensible" with Latin origins we find that English preserved its original meaning "wise" while French changed into "sensitive".

2. The original language changes or develops the significance of the borrowed word while it remains the same in the new one. Let us consider the example stated by Casanovas and O'Neill when they said that the noun "bug" in Middle English referred to all kinds of insects, yet in the 19 Century came to refer to bedbugs (a type of lice) (1994: 107). So, the word has undergone a process of specialization.

3. The native denotation of the loanword is mislaid in its new milieu while it is maintained in the original one. The two adverbs "eventually" and "actually" constitute a tangible examplification of false friends. They were borrowed from French earlier where they meant and still do "possibly" and "at the moment" respectively. English has adopted new meaning for them as "finally" for eventually and "in fact" for actually.

4. The word develops alongside in both languages but differently and by keeping the same morphology.

Consequently, it would be wrong to translate these different meanings by the same form and non-equivalent sense, otherwise the meaning will be completely distorted.

1.6.2. Psycholinguistic Perspective

From this point of view, the occurrence of false friends does pose the danger of translating the TT in terms of the mother tongue or a previously well-known language, particularly if the two languages are close to each other. In this respect, the inter-linguistic influence of the dominant language within the polyglot explains the most frequent errors.

In the case of polysemous words, the learners imagine that they will find the same meanings in the other language. However, they do not exist in the target language. As a result a mass production of false friends will take place. So, when the foreign language learners feel familiar with the target language they inevitably establish equivalences and analogies to curtail the distance between the languages under question and reduce stress.

1. 7. False Friends Typology

The large number of false friends, naturally, asks to establish a classification as a helping guide through their tangle to facilitate their treatment for the learners and lexicographers of bilingual dictionaries, especially if the two languages in concern are closely related. The present work cannot support all the types provided to false friends, its interest is only in semantic classification. Rufus, Prinsloo and De Shryver (2004) classified false friends according to their semantic continuity as follows:

a. **Absolute false friends:** they are the "strong version" of false friends and occupy one ending of the grading axis. They fit items with similar written form; however visibly different semantically. Such type is contestant because it creates a veritable difficulty when the learner may translate wrongly each

b. word into the other such as:

English	**French**
Ostensibly	Prétendument
Evident	Ostensible

c. Partial false friends: This type constitutes the most complex part in the issue of false friends, because it includes many variations such as homonymy, opposition, polysemy and specialization.

This typology is summarized schematically in Figure 1.
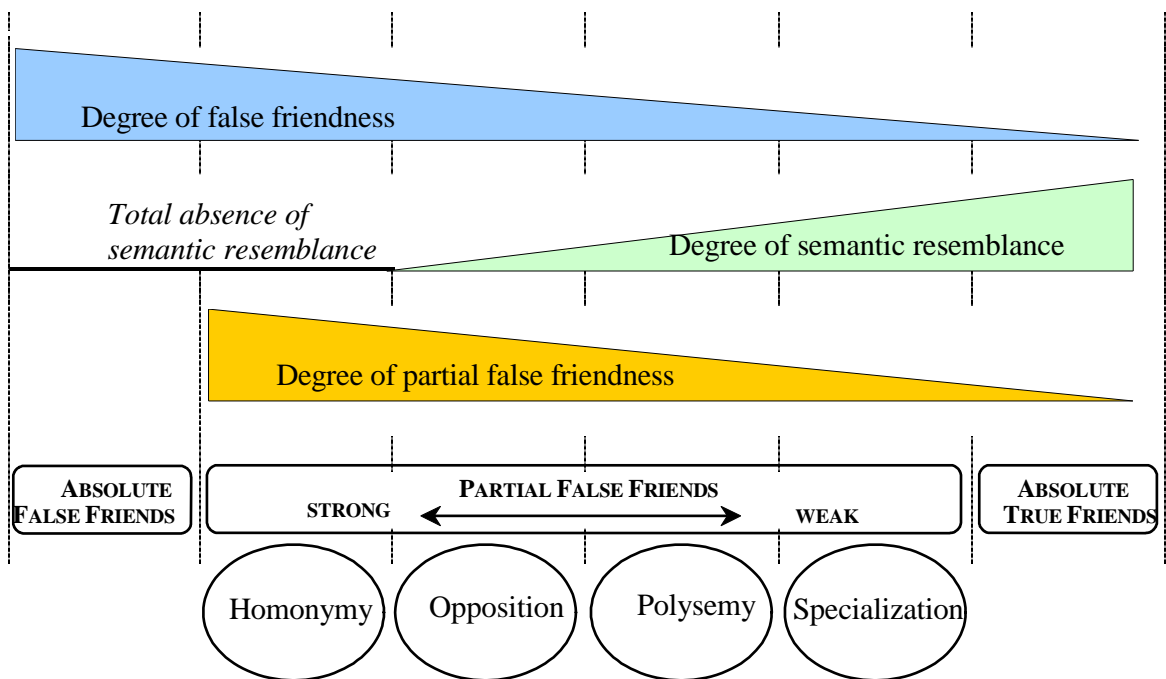
Figure 01: A semantic continuum of false friends
Adapted version from Rufus, Prinsloo and Gilles-Maurice (2004: 805)

Conclusion

To synopsize, this chapter's intention is to make plain the snares of false friends that rose from the cross-linguistic influence from conceptually related languages. It is found that they have a reiterated occurrence when the two concerned languages are close enough and have common vocabulary. Additionally, language transfer is proven to be another important factor that stimulates errors made by learners of foreign languages. Finally, contrastive analysis and error analysis are cooperating to provide a valuable help to those learners as a strong arm to face the difficulties met in their academic experience.

CHAPTER TWO

THE OUTCOME OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This research deals with third year students of translation (2009-2010) at the Department of Translation, Faculty of Letters and Languages. Its objectives are, first, to probe the students' skill and their awareness about the notion of false friends. Second, it targets at scrutinizing the students' translation of many sentences to see how they render false friends from French into English and how they sort out the difficulty they encounter within their undertaking. The choice of the population has been made haphazardly on 25 students taken from 30 tested ones. This choice was based on the fact that the students at this level are supposed to have a positively good command of both French and English after over 2 years of study. Added to this, translation is their major. The work is made up of a questionnaire and the translation of eight (08) sentences from French into English by a sample of students of translation. To finish off, some pedagogical recommendations are given to assist the students to get by the hoaxes of false friends in the process of translation.

2.1. The Students' Questionnaire
2.2.1. Description of the Questionnaire:

In this work, the students' questionnaire adopted consists of a composite of close and open items to reconnoitre an authentic data. This questionnaire comprises two main sections. The first one is consecrated to the students' profile (linguistic competence and translation preference). The second is devoted to students' knowledge about false friends.

2.1.2. Section One:

Question One:

How do you evaluate your competence in English?

a. Good   b. Average   c. Less than average   d. I don't know

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Good	03	12%
b. Average	17	68%
c. Less than average	03	12%
d. I don't know	02	08%

Table 01: Students' Competence in English

The results in table (01) show that, depending on the students self assessments, the majority of them (68%) have an average level in English. However, (12%) of the students have a good competence in English. Similarly, (12%) of them do not know about their competence, and two students ignore their level of competence.
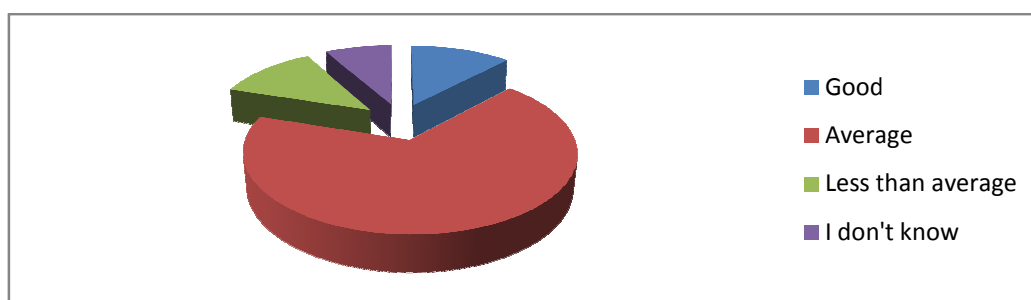
Figure 02: Students' Competence in English

Question Two:

How do you evaluate your competence in French?

a. Good   b. Average   c. Less than average   d. I don't know

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Good	09	36%
b. Average	12	48%
c. Less than average	02	08%
d. I don't know	02	08%

Table 02: Students' Competence in French

Table (02) shows that and according to the students' self-evaluation, most of them (48%) have an average competence in French. 36% of them has a good competence. Yet, (8%) of the students have a less than average competence in French, and the same ratio represents those who ignore their French competence.
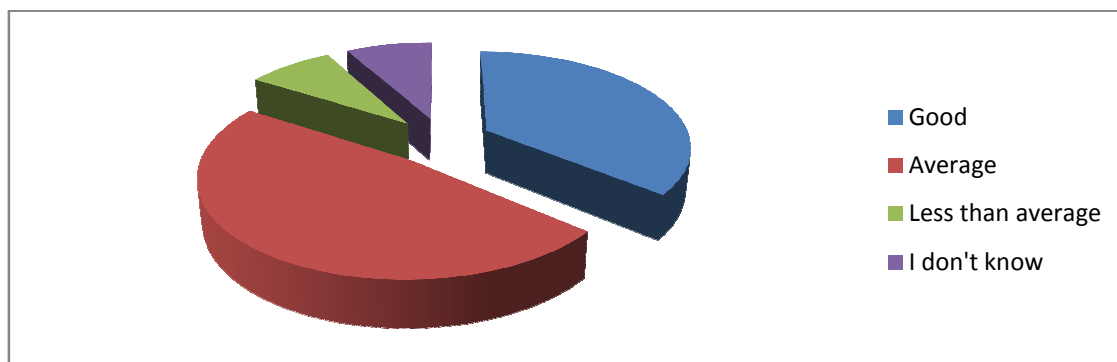
Figure 03: Students' Competence in French

Question Three:

What type of translation do you prefer?

a. English – Arabic – English
b. English – French – English

Justify your answer, please

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. English-Arabic-English	16	64%
b. English-French-English	09	36%

Table 03: Students' Preferences in Translation

The results in table (03) demonstrate that according to the students' judgment, the lion's share (64%) of them prefer English-Arabic-English translation, while (36%) of them prefer English-French-English translation knowing that all of them have a good

competence in French.
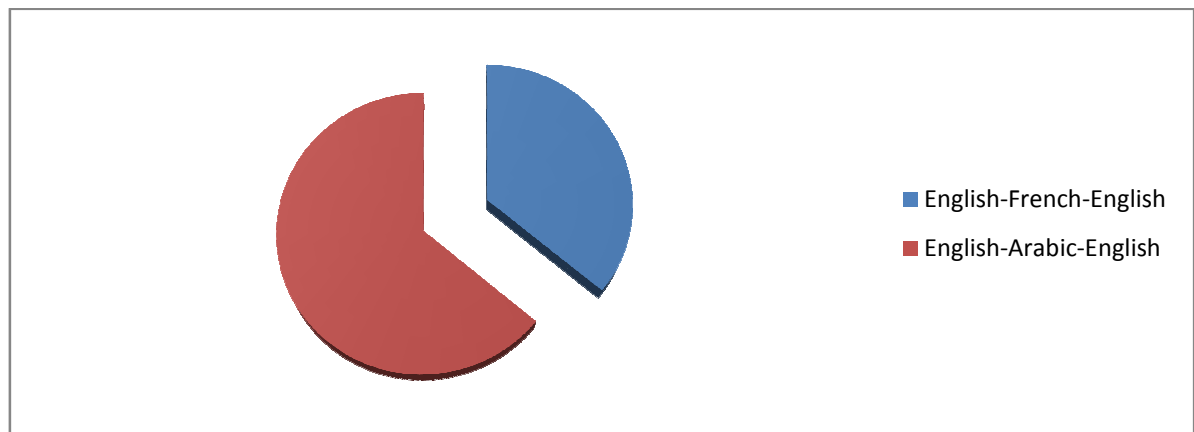
Figure 04: Students' Preferences in Translation

With regard to the justification of their preference, it comes as follows:

a. Students who prefer English-Arabic-English translation (64%):

- 43.75% prefer English-Arabic-English translation claiming that Arabic is their mother tongue, so it is easier for them to translate from and into it.

- 18.75% of the students prefer English-Arabic-English translation because they are more competent in Arabic than in French.

- 25% of the students prefer English-Arabic-English translation because they used to have this direction in class and not the other one, so it is just a matter of familiarity.

- 12.5% of the students who prefer English-Arabic-English did not justify their choice.

b. Students who prefer English-French-English translation (36%):

- Those students prefer this type of translation because they find that it is easier since the two languages are very close to each other; taking into account that according to their statement they have a good average in French.

2.1.3. Section Two:

   Question One:

Do you know about linguistic false friends or les faux amis?

   a. Yes   b. No

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Yes	09	36%
b. No	16	64%

Table 04: Students' knowledge about False Friends

   The result in table (04) shows that most students (64%) ignore the existence of

linguistic false friends and just (36%) of them knows about them.
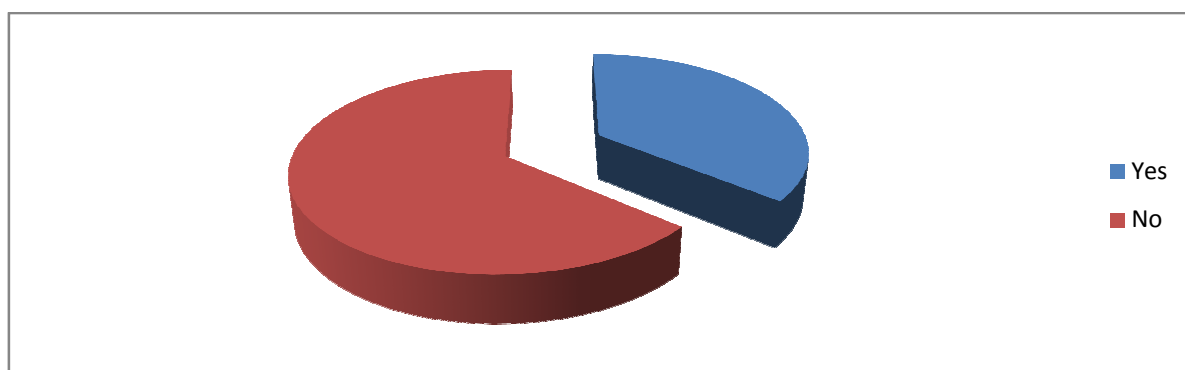
Figure 05: Students' Knowledge about False Friends

   Question Two:

If your answer is 'yes', please, explain:

   Concerning this question, it is found that all students who know about false friends

assume that they are words that share the same spelling but different meaning.

Question Three:

Identify the English equivalent of each French entry:

1. Éventuellement :

a. Finally
b. Possibly
c. Eventually

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Finally	0	0%
b. Possibly	03	12%
c. Eventually	22	88%

Table 05: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Eventuellement"

The results in this table reveal that, on the one hand, (88%) of the students misidentified the right equivalent of the French entry "Eventuellement". Since "Eventually" and "Eventuellement" share almost the same spelling, it led the students to misidentification. As "Eventually" means **"Ultimately"** and "Eventuellement" means **"Hypothetically"**, they cannot be the equivalent of each other. On the other hand, just (12%) of the students got the correct answer.
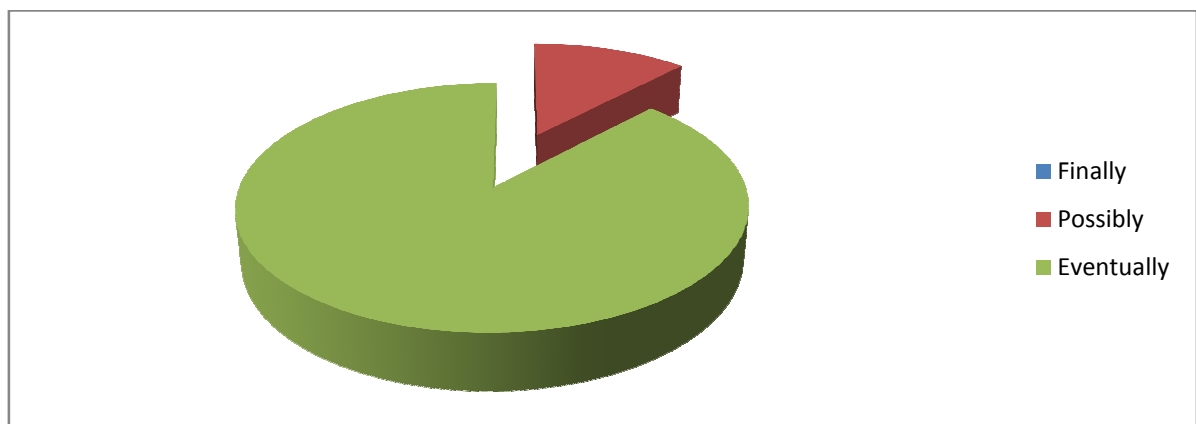
Figure 06: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Eventuellement"

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2. Sensible:

a. Sensitive
b. Sensible
c. Wise

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Sensitive	18	72%
b. Sensible	07	28%
c. Wise	0	0%

Table 06: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Sensible"

As can be seen in the table above, most students (72%) identified the correct answer, and (28%) could not. Therefore, most students distinguish between the different meanings that the adjective "sensible" takes in both French and English as **"Delicate"** and **"Conscious"** respectively. Consequently, they are aware that one cannot be a substitute for the other.
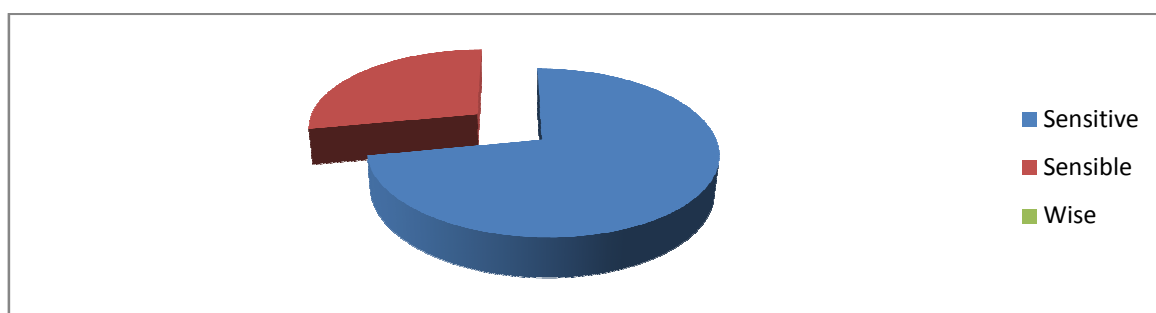
Figure 07: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Sensible"

3. Journal

a. Magazine
b. Newspaper
c. Journal

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Magazine	0	0%
b. Newspaper	23	92%
c. Journal	02	08%

Table 07: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Journal"

From table (07), it is deduced that students identification was almost flawless because (92%) of them identified the righteous equivalent, and only the minority (08%) did not. It seems that the vast majority is aware that "Journal" in French and English are not synonym, because "Journal" in English is **"Newspaper"** and the English "Journal" means **"Detailed personal diary"**.
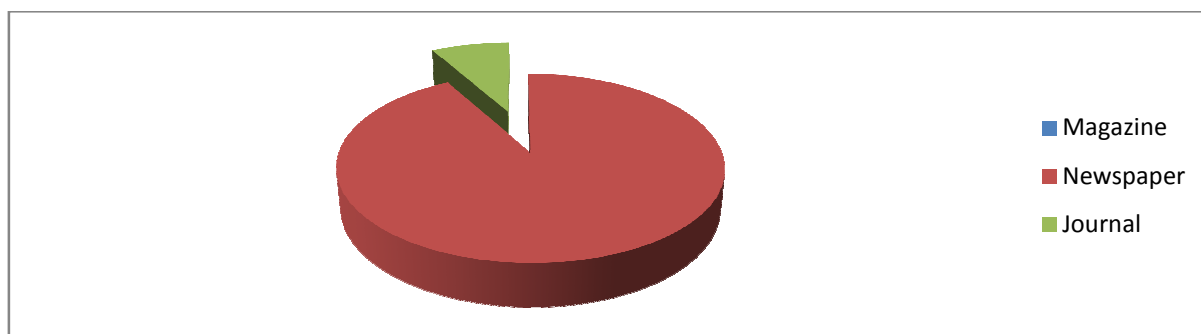
Figure 08: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Journal"

4. Assister

a. To attend
b. To assist
c. To give care

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. To attend	04	16%
b. To assist	18	92%
c. To give care	02	08%

Table 08: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Assister"

The results in table (08) indicate that the outnumbered part (72%) of the students failed to identify the accurate equivalent. However, (24%) of them (since both to attend and to give care are correct) picked up the exact answer. Besides, a student did not answer. The students in this question are confused because "to assist" and

"assister" are written similarly, so they think that they mean the same thing. However, "to assist" means actually **"to help"** and, thus, the correct equivalent of "assister" is **"to attend"**.
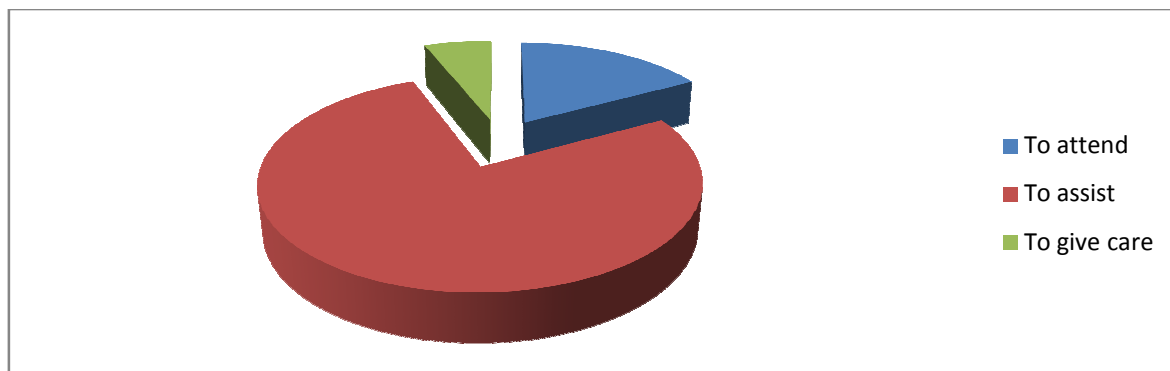
Figure 09: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Assister"

5. Evidemment

a. Of course
b. Evidently
c. Sure

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Of course	07	28%
b. Evidently	11	44%
c. Sure	05	20%

Table 09: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Evidemment"

Albeit the adverbs "Evidemment" and "Evidently" look the same, they have different meaning as **"Of course or Sure"** and **"Obviously"** respectively. The results in table (09) indicate that the marginal part (44%) of the students fell in the trap of false friends and chose the inaccurate equivalent, and approximately the same ratio of the students chose the veridical equivalents (of course and sure). Yet, (08%) of the students did not answer.
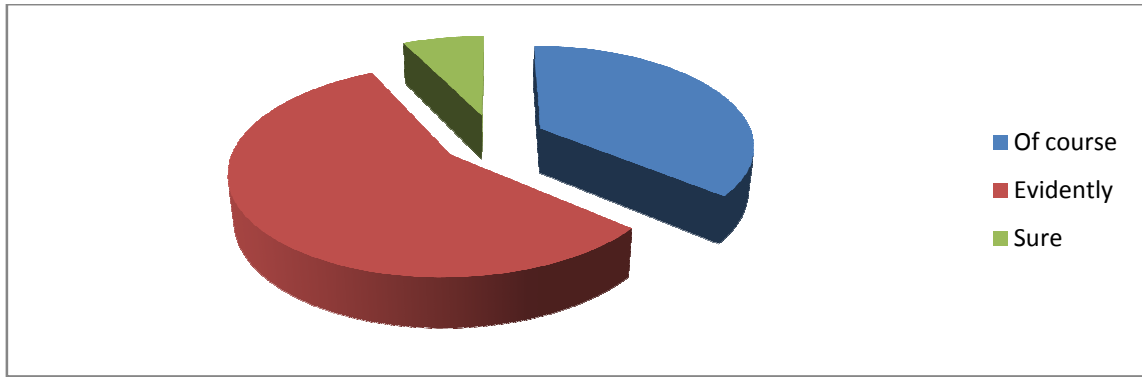
Figure 10: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Evidemment"

6. Enervant

a. Irritating
b. Enervating
c. Invigorating

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Irritating	07	28%
b. Enervating	12	48%
c. Invigorating	0	0%

Table 10: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Enervant"

From the first sight, "Enervant" and "Enervating" are thought to be similar. Anyone who ignores that they have distinct significances, as **"irritating"** for "Enervant" and **"weakening"** for "Enervating", may believe that they are equivalents. Table (10) exhibits that it was the case of the best part of the students, because (48%) flawed to identify the correct equivalent, while (28%) of them successfully picked up the accurate one. Additionally, (24%) of the students did not answer.
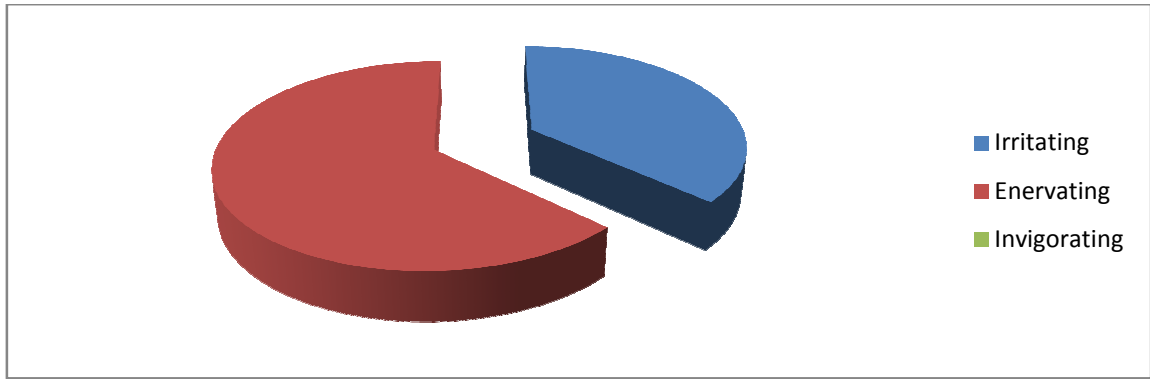
Figure 11: Students' Identification of the English Equivalent of "Enervant"

2.1.4. Discussion of the Questionnaire:

The analysis of the questionnaire shows that:

1. All the tested students who are competent in French prefer English-French-English translation rather than English-Arabic-English one as they feel more comfortable with this direction of translation. They supported their choice by the typical distance between English and French which makes the task of translation easier to them.

2. More than half of the tested students (64%) do not know about false friends. Even the minority, who knows about their existence, as words that have a similar written form but different meaning, does not know how to deal with their deceptive property. The results exhibit that the vast majority of the students confused to find the right equivalent between French and English when the concerned entry has an identical form in the other language.

3. Question three, in section two, illustrates students' crudeness about false friends' fraudulence. Seeing that, virtually all students could not identify the

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accurate English equivalent of each French entry but pick up directly its false friend; except for the entry "Journal" where the vast majority (92%) decided for "newspaper" to be the equivalent which is, in fact, the right one.

2.2. The Students' Translation

2.2.1.   Description of the Test:

The present test is complementary to the previous questionnaire. It casts around the students' translations of eight sentences to figure out their performances in translating them from French into English. The main objective of this test is to investigate the troubles caused by polysemous false friends and to examine how the students deal with them.

The sentences in concern are chosen from an e-article entitled "False friends: a kaleidoscope of translation difficulties". Each pair of sentences has the same false friend; nevertheless, these false friends have different meanings depending on its context of occurrence. These sentences where chosen intentionally for the subsequent reasons:

a. The sentences contain polysemous false friends that the students are supposed to be familiar with.

b. At the same time, they are of a fair length so that the students can manage to translate them in the assigned time.

The students' renderings are analyzed and errors are identified with explanation. The analysis, then, is culminated with a conclusion.

2.2.2. Analysis of the Students' Translation

a. First pair of sentences about "Fontaine":

a.1. Après quelques années, sans raison apparente, *la fontaine* s'est tarie et nous fûmes privés d'eau.

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. The spring	04	16%
b. The fountain	15	60%
c. No answer	06	24%

Table 11: Evaluation of the Students' Translation of the word "Fontaine" (Sense 1)

The word "Fontaine" in this sentence means **"a natural source of water"**. Although "Fountain" includes this among its meaning nuances but it is more appropriate to translate "Fontaine" into **"spring"**. The results in the table above show that the vast majority of the students (60%) did not provide the accurate translation and (16%) of them only got the right answer. However, (24%) did not answer.

a.2. Sais-tu combien il y a de *fontaines* pour la seule ville de Rome ?

Suggestions	0	%
a. The spring	03	22%
b. The fountain	22	88%

Table 12: Evaluation of the Students' Translation of the word "Fontaine" (Sense 2)

It is quite obvious in table (12) that almost all students (88%) successfully translated the target word, whereas (12%) mistranslated it. In this context "Fontaine" signifies **"a jet or spray of water",** so "fountain" is the suitable equivalent here and not "spring". However, it is worth noting that the students' successful translation is due their knowledge about the correct equivalent or due to positive transfer, since

both (ST) and the (TT) have the same spelling of the targeted entry.
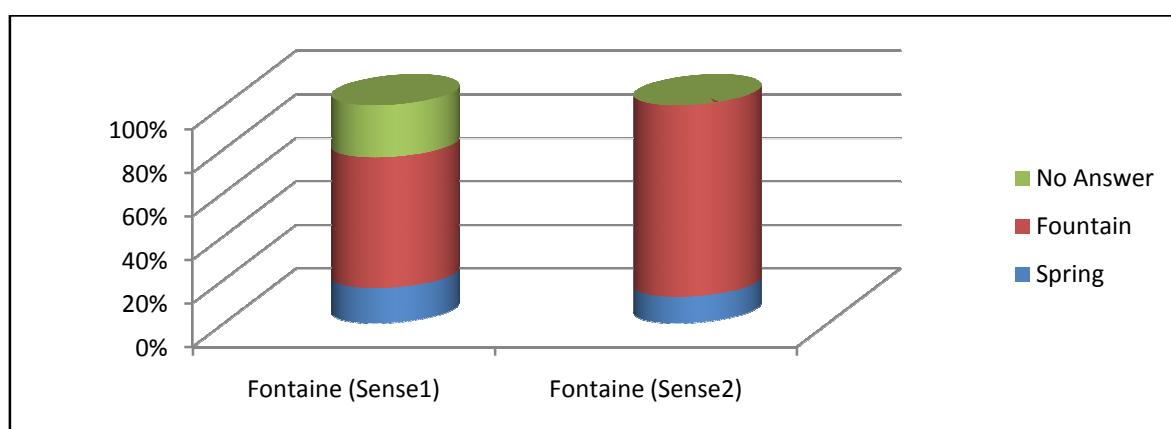
Figure 12: Students' Translation of "Fontaine"

b. Second pair of sentences about "Importante:

b.1. Cette question est trop *importante* pour qu'on la reporte à la réunion suivante.

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Important	24	96%
b. Interesting	01	4%

Table 13: Evaluation of the Students' Translation of the word "Importante" (Sense 1)

Table (13) reflects that almost all the students translated into the correct equivalent of the target word, except one student who rendered "Importante" into "interesting" which cannot be wrong but less appropriate because the students got the meaning of **"relevance and significance"**.

b.2. Ils ont dû payer une somme *importante* pour récupérer le tableau.

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Important	08	32%
b. Give money	03	12%

a. Considerable	02	08%
b. Lot of	02	08%
a. Expensive	02	08%
b. Big amount	03	12%
a. Huge	01	04%
b. Did not answer	04	16%

Table 14: Evaluation of the Students' Translation of the word "Importante" (Sense 2)

The results in table (14) show a wide range of varieties:

1. 16% of the students did not answer at all.

2. 32% of the students mistranslated the target word. They transferred the same form from the (ST) to the (TT) and they faced negative transfer because the "Importante" in this context is not the same in the two languages.

3. 12% of them presented word for word translation. They rendered "payer une somme" into "give money" without translating the target word.

4. 40% of the students' translation was acceptable because the students got the meaning that "Importante" means "valuable and expensive". The ratio is divided equally between "considerable, lot of and expensive" (8% for each). 12% was devoted for "Big amount" and finally 4% for "huge amount".
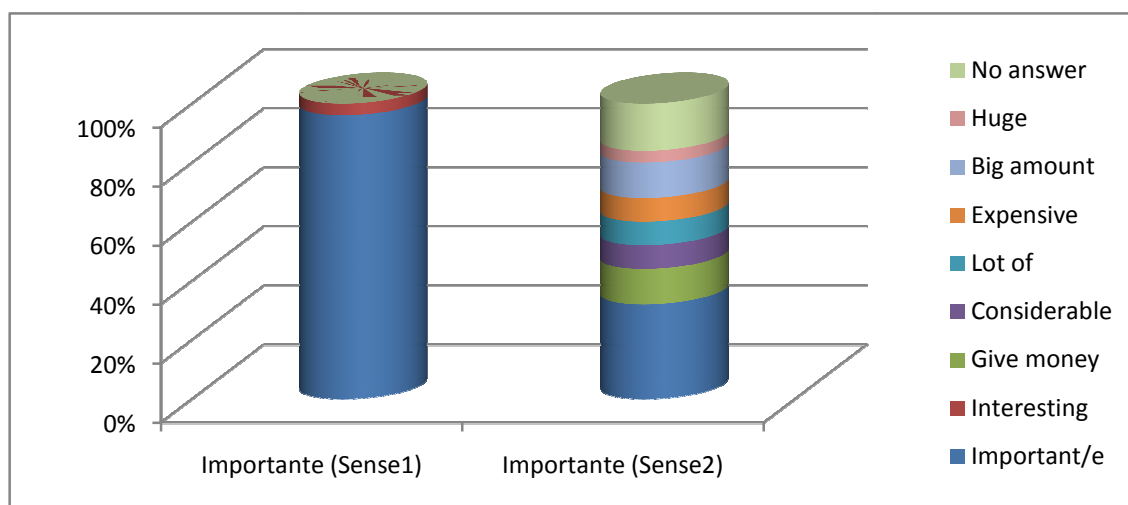

Figure 13: Students' Translation of "Importante"

c.   Third pair of sentences about "Obscur":

c.1. Ils jetèrent le prisonnier dans une pièce humide et *obscure*.

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Obscure	07	28%
b. Dark	12	48%
c. No answer	06	24%

Table 15: Evaluation of the Students' Translation of the word "Obscur" (Sense 1)

Table (15) shows that 24% of the students did not answer. 28% of the students translated the aimed word as "obscure" while it is more appropriate to be translated as "dark" because it signifies in this context **"dumb and unlighted room"**. 48% of the students provided a successful translation.

c.2. L'auteur est un romancier *obscur* du début du XIXe siècle.

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Obscure	07	28%
b. Ambiguous	09	36%
c. No answer	09	36%

Table 16: Evaluation of the Students' Translation of the word "Obscur" (Sense 2)

The table above reflects that only 28% of the students rendered an appropriate translation, because **"Obscure"** in this sentence means **"unknown".** In this case, it is not clear whether really the students know the correct meaning or just the positive perspective of language transfer has shown its facilitative role. 36% of them think that ambiguous is the equivalent while it is not appropriate; and similarly, 36% of the students refrained to answer, among them 05 students who presented an incomplete translation by neglecting the target word.

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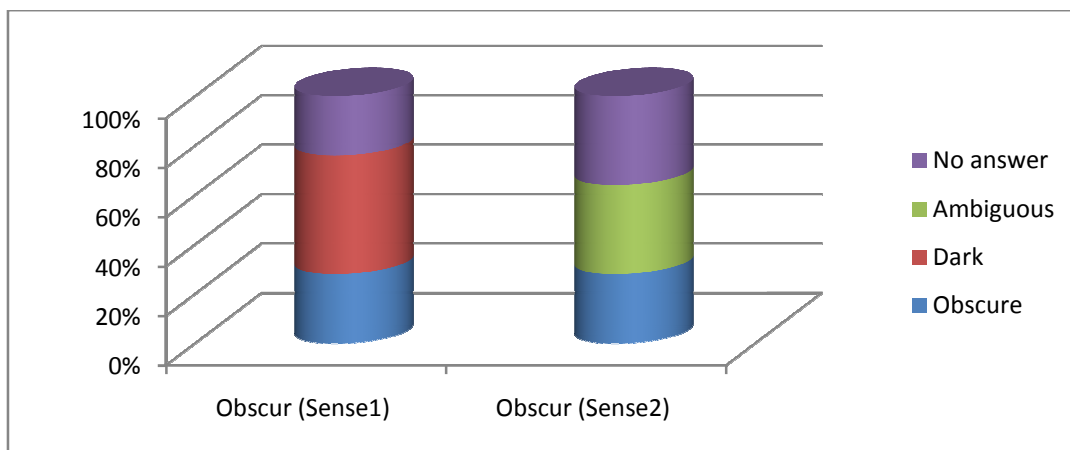
Figure 14: Students' Translation of "Obscur"

d. Fourth pair of sentences about "Heritage":

d.1. Il a dilapidé tout son héritage en moins d'un an.

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Inheritance	02	08%
b. Heritage	12	48%
c. No answer	11	44%

Table 17: Evaluation of the Students' Translation of the word "Heritage" (Sense 1)

Table (17) shows that (44%) of the students did not answer. Virtually the same ratio (48%) provided an inaccurate answer. However, just (08%) of them showed the right answer because "Héritage" in this context means **"succession by heredity of wealth and title**. Therefore, the results show that almost all students do not know about the peripheral meaning of "Héritage".

d.2. Nous avons le devoir de sauvegarder cet héritage.

Suggestions	N° of Occurrences	%
a. Heritage	25	100%

Table 18: Evaluation of the Students' Translation of the word "Heritage" (Sense 2)

The table above shows that all the students (100%) translated correctly the target word as "Héritage" here refers to **"riches of the past".** Consequently, it can be said that they grasped the meaning.
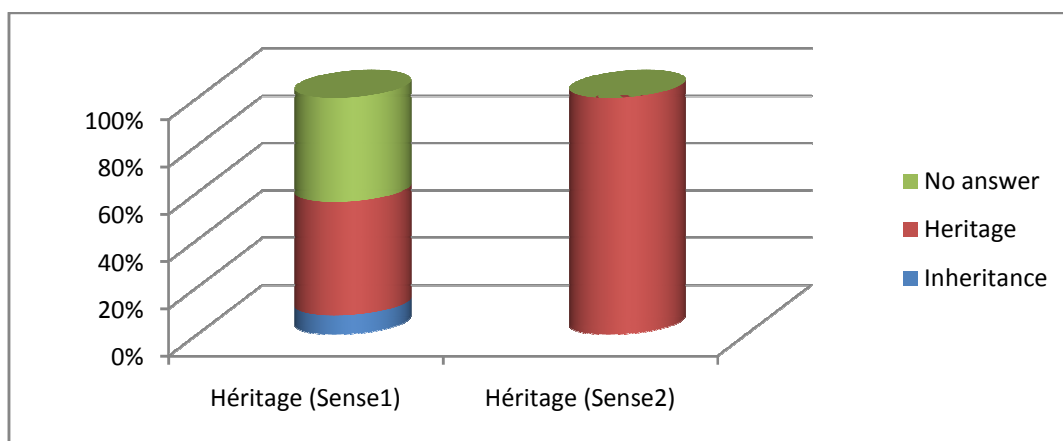
Figure 15: Students' Translation of "Héritage"

Conclusion

Conjointly, the analysis of the results gleaned from the students' questionnaire provides sufficient indicators that the majority of third year students, at the Department of Translation, faculty of Letters and Languages, ignore about false friends; and the minority that knows about them does not have any awareness about their deceptive meanings. Therefore they are conducted to confusion and certainly to error.

Furthermore, the analysis of the results deduced from the students' translation reflects clearly that they ignore the peripheral meaning of English equivalent of each French entry. Consequently, they rendered different meanings with the same equivalent to find themselves face to face with inappropriate translation. Additionally, the results found show that language transfer may play an important role in the recurrent mistranslation of the students.

Pedagogical Recommendations

To wind up, some pedagogical recommendations which may have a practical application to help the students to cope with false friends in order to achieve a better translation can be stated.

It follows that, besides the importance given to the strategies of translation, the students should be aware of the existence of false friends mainly when dealing with languages that sound similar. In addition, they are requested to develop their perception about the degree of the difficulty that false friends involve at different proficiency levels.

The role of the teachers henceforth, should not be restricted to equip the students only with lists of false friends but to find different and effective teaching techniques and methodologies to boost students' awareness about the subject. For instance, they should intensify the students' tasks with activities about the different meaning nuances in order to make them remember those false friends and to deal with polysemy and homonymy at the same time.

General Conclusion

The present study investigated the notion of false friends as a problem encountered in foreign language learning and specifically in translating from French as a first foreign language into English as a second one. This study took advantage of error analysis and adapted its methodology to reach a conclusion.

The results of the analysis reveal that third-year students in the Department of Translation have a real difficulty with false friends. First, the majority is not aware about this concept; it systematically implies that they fall recurrently in its trap. Second, cross-linguistic influence between French and English and their ignorance about the different denotations that the same item takes in both languages have a great deal in this problem. This was clearly located in the learners' translation resulting in different deviations. Therefore, the pedagogical implications suggested in the study aim at remedying this problem or at least minimizing the occurrence of errors that stem from false friends.

Such investigation might provide some insights on the process of foreign language learning. It might also pave the way to further investigations and reconsiderations about the subject.

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LIST OF APPENDENCES

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APPENDIX THREE: Suggested Translations

APPENDIX ONE

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire. Your answers are very important for the validity of the research we are undertaking. The questionnaire will not be marked and is anonymous. Yet, I hope that you work individually in order to have reliable results. Thank you in advance for your precious collaboration.

Circle the choice that best represents your answer. You are allowed only one choice.

Section One:

1. How do you evaluate your competence in English?
a. Good   b. Average   c. Less than average   d. I don't know

2. How do you evaluate your competence in French?
a. Good   b. Average   c. Less than average   d. I don't know

3. What type of translation do you prefer?
a. English – Arabic - English
b. English – French – English
    Justify your answer
    ……………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………

Section Two:

1. Do you know about linguistic *false friends* or les *Faux Amis*?
    a. Yes   b. No

2. If your answer is "yes", please, explain:
    ……………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………
3. Identify the English equivalent of each French entry:

3.1. Eventuellement:	a. Finally	3.4. Assister:	a. To attend
	b. Possibly		b. To assist
	c. Eventually		c. To give ear

3.2. Sensible:	a. Sensitive	3.5. Evidemment:	a. Of course
	b. Sensible		b. Evidently
	c. Wise		c. Sure

3.2. Journal:	a. Magazine	3.6. Enervant:	a. Irritating
	b. Newspaper		b. Enervating
	c. Journal		c. Invigorating

APPENDIX TWO

THE TEST

Dear Student,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire. Your answers are very important for the validity of the research we are undertaking. The questionnaire will not be marked and is anonymous. Yet, I hope that you work individually in order to have reliable results. Thank you in advance for your precious collaboration.

Translate the following sentences into English:

1. Après quelques années, sans raison apparente, *la fontaine* s'est tarie et nous fûmes privés d'eau.

   …………………………………………………………………………………….

2. Sais-tu combien il y a de *fontaines* pour la seule ville de Rome ?

   …………………………………………………………………………………..

3. Cette question est trop *importante* pour qu'on la reporte à la réunion suivante.

   …………………………………………………………………………………

4. Ils ont dû payer une somme *importante* pour récupérer le tableau.

   …………………………………………………………………………………

5. Ils jetèrent le prisonnier dans une pièce humide et *obscure*.

   …………………………………………………………………………………..

6. L'auteur est un romancier *obscur* du début du XIXe siècle.

   …………………………………………………………………………………..

7. Il a dilapidé tout son héritage en moins d'un an.

   …………………………………………………………………………………..

8. Nous avons le devoir de sauvegarder cet héritage.

   …………………………………………………………………………….......

APPENDIX THREE

Suggested Translations

a.1. Après quelques années, sans raison apparente, *la fontaine* s'est tarie et nous fûmes privés d'eau.

- After a few years *the spring* dried up for no apparent reason and we were left without water.

a.2. Sais-tu combien il y a de *fontaines* pour la seule ville de Rome ?

- Do you know how many *fountains* there are in Rome alone?

b.1. Cette question est trop *importante* pour qu'on la reporte à la réunion suivante.

- This question is too *important* to be postponed until the next meeting.

b.2. Ils ont dû payer une somme *importante* pour récupérer le tableau.

- They had to pay a *large/considerable* sum of money to get the picture back.

c.1. Ils jetèrent le prisonnier dans une pièce humide et *obscure*.

- They threw the prisoner into a damp, *dark* room.

c.2. L'auteur est un romancier *obscur* du début du XIXe siècle.

- The author in an obscure early-19th-century novelist.

d.1. Il a dilapidé tout son *héritage* en moins d'un an.

- He squandered all his *inheritance* in less than a year.

d.2. Nous avons le devoir de sauvegarder cet *héritage*.

- It is our duty to preserve this spiritual and cultural *heritage*.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude est une enquête qualitative et quantitative accomplie pour permettre une illustration à propos des difficultés rencontrées par les étudiants de troisième année dans le département de la traduction quand ils traduisent du Français vers l'Anglais. Elle vise à souligner les aberrations causées par des éléments lexicaux mutuels dans les deux langues. En d'autres termes pour découvrir l'étendue des anomalies qui résultent de la notion de faux amis. Pour vérifier l'hypothèse de cette étude, les données de recherche ont été recueillies par le biais d'un questionnaire et d'un test de traduction. Après le recensement et le traitement des erreurs observées; les résultats révèlent que les faux amis de la réciprocité linguistique plus l'ignorance des étudiants de leur existence constituent un problème critique pour les apprenants des langues étrangères. En conséquence des résultats obtenus, certaines recommandations sont proposées pour les enseignants et les apprenants de la Traduction pour gérer ce problème.

ملخص

هذه الدراسة عبارة عن بحث نوعي وكمي يهدف إلى توضيح الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب السنة الثالثة في قسم الترجمة عندما يترجمون من اللغة الفرنسية إلى اللغة الانكليزية. كما تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على الانحرافات الناجمة عن المشتركات اللفظية (الجميلات الخائنات) بين اللغة الفرنسية و اللغة الانكليزية؛ بعبارة أخرى لمعرفة مدى التشوهات التي تنتج عن هذا المفهوم. للتحقق من فرضية من هذه الدراسة، تم جمع بيانات البحث من خلال استبيان واختبار في الترجمة. توضح النتائج أن المشتركات اللفظية (الجميلات الخائنات) إضافة إلى جهل الطلاب بوجودها تشكل مشكلا خطيرا للطلاب. اعتمادا على النتائج المحصل عليها، تم اقتراح بعض الوصايا إلى كل من اساتدة و طلاب قسم الترجمة لمعالجة هده المشكلة.