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Problems in Translating collocations

The Case of Master I Students of Applied Languages

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Dedication

This research project is dedicated especially to my wonderful parents, thanks for their constant support, unconditional help and continuous encouragement.

To my wife, for her kindness and help

To my sisters, brothers and close friends, thanks for their help, each one in his/her own way.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to have some insights about the students' awareness of collocations, and the different problems which the students may face when translating different types of collocations. We will try to test and evaluate their awareness by examining their translation of English collocations into Arabic, and vice versa. The study is carried out through a test divided into two parts. The first part is a test of knowledge in which the students answer three separate questions relying on their background knowledge about collocations. The second part is the translation of collocations from English into Arabic and vice versa. The results of this research reveal two main causes of students' errors in translating collocations. First, students adopt literal translation as the main translation method. Second, students do not give enough importance to collocations which belong to another culture and language. The main conclusion is that collocations are both a linguistic and a cultural issue and are not just a matter of substituting words by their equivalents in the other language.

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List of Abbreviations

SL	Source Language
TL	Target Language
ST	Source text
TT	Target text
CM	Causes of Mistranslation
LM	Literal Meaning
ST.AR	Standard Arabic
RLC	Restricted Linguistic Competence
BK	Background Knowledge
V	Verb
N	Noun
ADV	Adverb
ADJ	Adjective
PREP	Preposition

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Translation is a human activity of enormous importance, and it is the other facet of communication in addition to language. It provides many solutions to miscommunication and misunderstanding between languages and societies. So, it is the indispensable device that people from different societies use to communicate. Translators are confronted with serious issues at various levels such as grammar, lexis, and meaning. The main concern of this dissertation is to investigate the different problems that English students may face at the cultural level when translating collocations that constitute an important part of any language, and their use is generally presented as typical to the natives. Further, it investigates the main causes that lead to a mistranslation. Despite the theoretical rules of translation acquired via learning, the Master I students of English (Applied Language Studies) still make errors in translating discourse from and into their mother tongue, especially in translating collocations.

2. Rationale

The reason behind investigating this topic is that many university students commit errors when trying to translate collocations mainly from English into Arabic and from Arabic into English. In addition, the study aims at shedding some light on the students' awareness of the concept of collocations, and their familiarity with them, and investigating the pitfalls that English students face at the cultural level when translating collocations that constitute an important part of any language. Moreover, the study tries to find solutions to this issue in order to limit the gaps between the SL and the TL in translating cultural expressions, and try to find strategies that would reduce students' mistranslation.

3. Research Questions

- What are the possible difficulties that Master I students of English face when translating collocations?
- Is the difficulty in translating collocations due to their unfamiliarity?
- Do students frequently use dictionaries notably specific ones to achieve an equivalent translation in translating collocations?
- What are the main causes that lead to mistranslation?

4. Hypothesis

In view of the differences between languages in their collocations, and idiosyncrasy of collocations in general, hypothesising that English learners are unfamiliar with English collocations, and our hypothesis can be stated as follows: If students of English are given more practice and submitted to extensive decoding programs including the translation of collocations and other vocabulary elements, their translational competence will be enhanced.

5. Means of the Research

To check our hypothesis, a translation test seems to be the appropriate tool for the data collection procedure. This test is regarded as a very useful methodological procedure to have an idea about the students' performance by testing their translation product. The test consists of two main parts. The first part is a test of knowledge and consists of three questions where the students' responses are based on their background knowledge about collocations.

The second part is a practical one and consists of two tasks. The first one consists of ten English expressions to be translated into Arabic; the second consists of ten Arabic expressions to be translated into English.

6. Structure of the Study

The present research project consists of two chapters. The first chapter is divided into two parts; the first one deals with translation, and its methods, procedures and theories. The second deals with collocations, and general problems and solutions in translating collocations. The second chapter is devoted to the practical work. It will denote the analysis of the data and the interpretation of the results obtained from a test given to a group of thirty Master I students of English (Applied Languages Studies).

Chapter One

Translation of Collocations

Introduction

One of the language components is vocabulary, which includes connotations, collocations, idioms, proverbs, and metaphors. A collocation is the combination of two words or more creating a meaning which is different from the meaning of the separate words. Collocations are an important part in language and their translation seems to be more important especially if they are unfamiliar to students and belong to another culture and language. This chapter deals in the first part with translation, its methods and procedures and in the second part with collocations, and its types and general problems and solutions.

1.1. Translation

1.1.1. Definition

According to Hleil (1990:16), “Translation is the process to transfer written or spoken source language (SL) texts to equivalent written or spoken target language (TL) texts”. The basic purpose of translation is to reproduce various types of texts, comprising literary, religious, scientific, and philosophical texts in another language and thus making them available to wider readers, to a greater number of target audiences and to bring the world closer.

However, translation is not an easy job. If language is just a classification for a set of general or universal concepts, it will be of course very easy to translate from a source language to a target language. But translation covers not only word for word translation but also many other factors. The concepts of one language may differ radically from those of another language. This is because each language articulates or organizes the word differently. The bigger the gap between the SL and the TL, the more difficult the process of transfer will

be. The difference between the two languages and the difference in cultures make the process of translating a real challenge.

1.1.2. Translation Procedures

The translation procedures, as depicted by Nida (1964), are divided into two groups as follows:

1.1.2.1. Technical Procedure

This implies an analysis of the source and target languages and a complete study of the SL text before translating it.

1.1.2.2. Organizational Procedure

This implies a constant re-evaluation of the translation made. It also includes the comparison of the existing translation with the translations of the same text by other translators. The organizational procedure also checks the translated text's communicative effectiveness by getting the opinion of the TL audience to evaluate its accuracy and effectiveness and studying their reactions.

1.1.3. Methods of Translation

Translation is generally used to refer to all the processes and methods used to convey the meaning of the source language into the target language. That is the use of words which already have an equivalent in the target language, new words for which no equivalent was available in the target language.

Mostly, translation is a reference to the process of using the words which are usually available in the source language to transmit meaning into the target language. Some of the common methods of translation are proposed and explained by Newmark (1988) as follows:

- **Word-for-Word Translation**

In this method, the source language word is translated into another language by their most common meanings, which can also be out of context at times, especially in idioms and proverbs.

- **Literal Translation**

In this method, the source language grammatical constructions are translated to their nearest target language. However the lexical words are translated singly, out of context.

- **Faithful Translation**

In this method, the translation interprets the exact contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the grammatical structures of the target language.

- **Semantic Translation**

Semantic translation refers to that type of translation which takes into account the aesthetic value of the source language text.

- **Adaptation**

Adaptation refers to that type of translation which is used mainly for plays and poems. The text is rewritten considering the source language culture which is converted to the target language culture where the characters, themes, and plots are usually preserved.

- **Free Translation**

This method of translation produces the translated text without the style, form, or content of the original text.

- **Idiomatic Translation**

It reproduces the message of the original text but tends to distort the original meaning at times by preferring colloquialisms and idioms, where these do not exist in the original.

- **Communicative Translation**

This method attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original text in a manner where both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readers. (Newmark, 1988 b: 45-47).

1.1.4. Theories of Translation

Theories of translation may have two main patterns: literal theories and linguistic theories. The former are considered as highly subjective, however, the latter are characterized by having more objective basis for studies of translation.

1.1.4.1. Literary Theories of Translation

Literary theories of translation are built on different schools of literary criticism. They consider translation as an art for those who are interested in literature such as Hermans, Baker, Wechsler. Such theories view translation as an activity which has a crucial role in comparative study of literature. These theories are characterized by being highly subjective.

1.1.4.2. Linguistic Theories of Translation

Linguistic theories of translation seek more objective basis for translation studies. They make the use of various linguistic theories. For these scholars, a translation theory is a part of general linguistic theory. They exploit basic linguistic categories to investigate problems of translation. So, translation is an art for those who are interested in literature and it is a science for those who are interested in linguistics. General principles can be taught and guidance can be provided, but it must be left after that to the individuals' own feeling for the two languages involved. Malmkjaer (2004) insists in his books on the students' self- involvement in the process of translation. He advises teachers of translation to prevent what he called "premature and over- specialization" among students. (ibid: 10). In other words, let the students get engaged and learn from their experiences in the field, but with directions from their teachers.

1.1.5. Translation Equivalence

Most translators agree that translation is based on the equivalence between the source and the target texts. According to Shuttleworth and Cowie, "equivalence is a term used by many writers to describe the nature and the extent of the relationships which exist between SL and TL texts or smaller linguistic units" (1997: 49). The extent of equivalence between the source and the target texts differs from a translation to another. For many translators absolute translation is not possible because languages cannot be similar at all. Let us consider the following two sentences:

1-Ali went to university

2- ذهب علي إلى الجامعة

They are considered as equivalents in their meaning and in their form.

Translators and linguists follow various trends to determine the nature of equivalence, some concentrate on a linguistic approach, others on a cultural and contextual approach. Catford defines translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by

equivalent textual material in another language (TL)” (1965:20), and agrees that one of the central tasks of translation theory is “that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence” (ibid: 21). Catford views that equivalence is something essentially quantifiable, and translation is simply a matter of replacing each SL item with the most suitable TL equivalent chosen from a list of all the potential equivalents.

A number of scholars subdivide the notion of equivalence in various ways; some have distinguished between the equivalence found at the levels of different units of translation, while others have formulated a number of complete equivalence typologies, such as Nida’s influential dynamic and formal equivalence. According to him, formal equivalence focuses on the message itself, in both form and content. It means that a translator should make a balance between the target text and the source text in order to convey the source text message faithfully (Nida, 1995).

Formal equivalence aims at receiving the source text message correctly while dynamic equivalence stresses on the effect of this message on the target reader. That is, the effect of the target text on the target reader should be equal to the effect of the source text on the source reader (Munday, 2001:42).

Baker (1992) discusses translational equivalence in relation to different levels:

1. Word level and above word level: she claims that the word is the basic unit in language. Therefore, a translator should look for the equivalent at the word level between source and target text before starting translation.
2. Grammatical equivalence: the difference of the grammatical structure between the source and the target language creates problems. For example, the word (امراتان) in Arabic indicates duality which is not found in English grammar. The translator is obliged to use the plural form in English “women”.

3. Textual level: in order to have a cohesive and coherent target text, a translator should analyse the source text (cohesive devices, rhetorical function...), and the target text should involve the same characteristics of the source text, thus, source and target texts should be textually equivalent.

4. Pragmatic level: the translator should analyse the source text and understand the writer's intentions in order to get the right meaning, and then render it into the target text correctly. So, source and target texts should be pragmatically equivalent. According to Hatim and Munday, meaning and translation are affected by co-text and context (2004). By co-text it is meant the linguistic context (words, grammatical structure, lexical structure...), context involves relationships between speakers, prosodic features (gestures, facial expressions, intonation...) and cultural aspects between source and target texts.

1.2. Collocations

1.2.1. Definition

“A collocation is a combination of two or more words that always occur together consistently in different contexts in languages. That is, a certain noun occurs with a certain adjective e.g.: “blind confidence” (ثقة عمياء); a verb with a noun e.g.: “draw a sword” (يستل سيفاً); a noun with a noun e.g.: “brain drain” (هجرة الأدمغة)” (Ghazala, 1995: 108).

Collocations play a vital role in language, they are its beautiful part, and inject a refreshing spirit in it. They are present and inevitable in any kind of text with no exception.

1.2.2. Types of Collocations

The translation of collocations can be discussed through the discussion of their commonest types in English. In principle, fixed phrases and expression of all types come under the general umbrella of collocations. According to Benson (1985), there are several types of collocations. However, the concentration is on the most important types only, which are extremely recurrent and interest the most. The classification of these types is purely

grammatical, depending on the grammatical groupings of word classes according to their occurrence together in language use. The adoption of grammatical description makes the structure of collocations easier to follow, understand, and hence, easy to translate.

1- Adjective + Noun Collocations

e.g “Hard labor” (أشغال شاقة)

“Net weight” (الوزن الصافي)

“Warm reception” (استقبال حار)

Many examples can be found in both English and Arabic for this most popular type of collocation. Usually, these collocations are translated into identical Arabic collocations (Noun+ adjective) as the examples show. This is possible in most cases, and students should be encouraged to do their best to find the equivalent collocation in Arabic. However, there are collocations in English which do not have identical ones in Arabic:

E.g.: “peaceful death” (موت هادئ)

“Good day” (يوم سعيد)

“Bad news” (أخبار سيئة)

The Arabic versions are not widely recognized collocations; they can be called semi-collocations, or just translations.

The main problem for students is to find the proper Arabic equivalent collocations. At least, they just translate the collocation at hand correctly and suitably into Arabic. In order to appreciate these and other collocations, the student can draw a comparison between proper collocations and ordinary different collocations as the following examples show:

1- (أشغال شاقة) to (أعمال مضمّنية)

2- (استقبال حار) to (استقبال ساخن)

3- (سوق سوداء) to (سوق داكنة)

The comparison between each pair of these examples indicates that the group on the left is more familiar, comprehensive and formal than the second one on the right.

Special adjective-noun collocations are used to describe bad, inedible food.

E.g.: “addled eggs”	(بيض فاسد)
“Bad milk”	(حليب فاسد)
“Putrid meat/fish”	(لحم/سمك فاسد)
“Rancid butter”	(زبدة زنخة)
“Rotten fruit”	(فاكهة فاسدة، عفنة)

These collocations pose some problems to students of translation into Arabic, because it is difficult to find Arabic equivalents for the English adjectives. The problem, here, is easy to overcome. The solution is simply to use the adjective (فاسد/فاسدة) with all kinds of bad food.

2- Verb + Noun Collocations

e.g “Pass a law”	(يسن قانونا)
“Win confidence”	(يكسب الثقة)
“Pay attention”	(يلفت الانتباه)
“Exert an effort”	(يبذل جهدا)

The central point, here, is to match a certain verb with a certain noun in Arabic (as the examples show). We usually say (يبذل جهدا) not (يقدم جهدا); (يسن قانونا) not (يصنع/يمرر قانونا); (يربح الثقة) not (يكسب الثقة); (يلقن درسا) not (يعلم درسا); (يلفت الانتباه) not (يحرص انتصارا); (يبذل جهدا) not (يقدم جهدا); (يسن قانونا) not (يصدر قانونا); (يفوز) not (يكتسب الثقة); (يلفت الانتباه) not (ينتبه); (يحرص انتصارا) not (يكتسب الثقة).

The problem for students with these collocations is to spot the suitable verb in Arabic. They can translate them into their meanings: For example (يصدر قانونا) instead of (يسن قانونا); (يفوز) instead of (يكتسب الثقة); (يلفت الانتباه) instead of (ينتبه); (يحرص انتصارا) instead of (يكتسب الثقة).

As for the grammatical structure of these collocations in Arabic, it is mostly a verb + noun (or a verb + an adj). Yet, few exceptions can exist:

E.g.: “pay a visit”	(يقوم بزيارة)
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“Recognize a state”	(يعترف بدولة)
“Shake hands”	(يصافح)

3- Noun + Noun Collocations

E.g.: “brain drain “	(هجرة الأدمغة)
“Nerve cell“	(خلية أعصاب)
“Gas cylinder“	(أسطوانة غاز)
“Death sentence“	(حكم الإعدام)
“Poet laureate“	(أمير الشعراء)
“Honey moon“	(شهر عسل)
“Essay bank“	(بنك المعلومات)

These collocations usually have equivalents in Arabic, but with different grammatical structures. Two dominant structures are available in Arabic: (a) “noun + adjective” e.g.

“State university” (جامعة حكومية)

(b) “Noun + Noun” genitive construction.

Some examples can also be translated into noun + adjective: (خلية عصبية) and (أسطوانة غازية).

Yet, we cannot say (هجرة دماغية) or (شهر عسلي); or (أمير شاعري). The students should remember the fixed structures of these Arabic collocations. The big problem for students, here, is to know the proper equivalent collocation in Arabic, especially for difficult English collocations like “brain drain”, “essay bank”. The solution is to avoid literal understanding as much as possible, and at the same time to do their best to understand the English collocation properly and translate it into its Arabic proper equivalent, using all available resources.

4- Noun + Noun (the of - genitive) Collocations

E.g. “Loss of memory”	(فقدان الذاكرة)
“The heart of the matter”	(جوهر الأشياء)
“Association of ideas”	(تداعي الأفكار)

“A sign of relief”	(تنفس الصعداء)
“The court of appeal”	(محكمة الاستئناف)
“The hour of decision”	(ساعة الحسم)

All these collocations are translated into equivalent Arabic collocations of identical grammatical structures: “of genitive”. Although direct translation applies to such collocations, the students must be careful that some of them have different words in Arabic i.e. (تنفس الصعداء) and not (ساعة القرار); (تنهد الراحة); (ساعة الحسم) not (ساعة القرار).

On the other hand, most of these collocations are translated into collocations in Arabic. Yet, a number of them can be translated into meaning only e.g.: “a ghost of a chance” (شبح فرصة); “the depths of despair” (أعمال اليأس).

5- Noun + and + Noun (addition) Collocations

“Means and ends”	(الوسائل و الغايات)
“Food and drink”	(الطعام و الشراب)
“Good and evil”	(الخير و الشر)
“Form and content	(الشكل و المضمون)
“Heart and soul”	(قلبا و قالبا)

These collocations are easy to translate directly into “noun + and + noun” collocations in Arabic. The case is so, but not always, as some of these collocations can be different in use. The last example is used in the position of an adverb, as in:

“He is with us heart and soul” (هو معنا قلبا و قالبا)

This is equal to: “He is with us wholeheartedly”

Other English collocations of addition are not collocations in Arabic such as “terms and conditions” (بنود و شروط). On the other hand, the following collocation “goods and chattel” (أموال منقولة و غير منقولة), is a well known collocation both in English and Arabic laws, and should be rendered in Arabic only in this form. Concerning the collocation “vice and virtue”

(الفضيلة و الرذيلة), the word order in Arabic is the opposite of that in English. That is (الفضيلة) is first and then (الرذيلة) whereas in English “vice” (الرذيلة) is before “virtue”. Therefore, literal translation of the English word order does not work.

6- Adjective+ Adjective Collocations

- E.g. 1- “Healthy and well” (بصحة و عافية/ صحيح معافى)
 2- “Right and proper” (في أحسن حال/ كامل مكمّل)
 3- “Alive and kicking” (حي يرزق)

The problem in translating such everyday collocations into Arabic is that first, the grammatical structure is different and quite unpredictable, that is example 1 and 2 can be translated into “preposition + noun + noun”; whereas example 3 is: noun + verb “hale and hearty” (بصحة جيدة) and “right and proper” (في أحسن حال) can be translated into one and the same collocation: either (بصحة جيدة), (على خير ما يرام) or (في أحسن حال). Besides, one word can be enough to translate them (معافى), (صحيح) or (سليم). Yet, it is not a collocation, but regarded as weaker than the former versions; they can also be translated into two words (adj + adj) (صحيح معافى) or (كامل مكمّل).

7- Adverb + Adverb Collocations

- E.g. “wholly and heartedly” (بالتمام والكمال)
 “Secretly and publicly” (سرا و علانية/ في السر و العلن)
 “willy nilly” (شاء أم أبي/ رغم أنه)

The three Arabic translations are collocations but have different grammatical structures. They are grammatically different from the English collocations.

8- Noun +Verb Collocations (names of sounds)

- E.g. “Bees buzz” (دوي النحل)
 “Bells ring/ toll” (رنين الأجراس)
 “Cats mew” (مواء القطط)

“Dogs bark” (نباح الكلاب)

“Snakes hiss” (فصيح الأفاعي)

These collocations are not difficult to translate into Arabic collocations; the problem for the students is to be able to recognize the sound of the animal, insect or thing required in Arabic. The solution is to know the name of the sound in question in the target language which is possible for students. For example, using the word (الصوت) as a general word to describe the sound of anything is poor and unadvisable ("صوت النمل" "صوت القطة" "صوت الجرس").

On the other hand, the grammatical structure in Arabic is “a noun + a noun” (i.e. genitive), not “noun + a verb) as in English. Yet, a noun and a verb construction are possible in Arabic if the context requires that. E.g.: ‘I heard the dogs bark last night’ (سمعت الكلاب تنبح (ليلة أمس).

9- Prepositional Collocations

9.1. Noun+ Preposition Collocations

E.g.: “A claim for” (إدعاء بـ)

“A protest against” (احتجاج على)

“A pride in” (تفاخر بـ)

Predictable examples are not included, e.g.: “conversation about” (محادثة عن/ حول); “a suggestion concerning” (اقتراح يتعلق بـ/ بخصوص). The students should beware of the direct translation of the preposition. We do not say in Arabic (تلاعب على الألفاظ) but (التلاعب بالألفاظ); (تفاخر في) but (تفاخر بـ). The problem is to spot the suitable preposition after the noun in Arabic. This needs to be done regardless of the preposition in English. The solution is the students’ increasing interest in Arabic prepositions, and their unusual use in context.

9.2. Preposition + Noun Collocations

“By accident” (بمحض الصدفة)

“In advance” (مقدما)

“By surprise” (على حين غرة)

“On the contrary” (على العكس)

These English collocations are fixed phrases and cannot be translated directly. Although many of them are translated into identical Arabic prepositional phrases (i.e. preposition + noun), others are quite unpredictable. Some of the translations in Arabic are well-known collocations such as “by accident” (مصادفة); “on the alert” (على أهبة الاستعداد), “by surprise” (على حين غرة).

The problem for students with these collocations is to understand them rightly as fixed expressions in Arabic. The solution is to exert some efforts to get the appropriate translation in Arabic, bearing in mind the risks of direct translation. Usually, good dictionaries include such collocations.

9.3. Adjective + Preposition Collocations

"Full of" (مليء بـ)

“Fond of” (مغرم بـ)

“Angry at” (غاضب من)

The problem is the meaning of the preposition which should be translated with extra care by the students. Literal translation is again destructive, here. The solution is to be on the alert that some of these collocations can be fixed phrases with fixed meanings. The grammatical construction in Arabic is the same as in English (i.e. “adjective + preposition”).

9.4. Verb + Preposition Collocations (prepositional verbs)

“Long for” (يشتاق إلى)

“Call at” (ينادي على)

“Protest against” (يحتج على)

“Dream of” (يحلم بـ)

Prepositional verbs like these resist direct translation. We cannot say (يشتاق لأجل); (ينادي على); (يحتج ضد); (يحلم من) respectively. A back translation of the correct versions illustrates the point further:

(يشتاق إلى)	“Long to”
(ينتظر فلانا)	“Wait for somebody”
(ينادي على)	“Call on”
(يحتج على)	“Protest on”
(يحلم بـ)	“Dream with”

These collocations are not acceptable in English. Equally, the Arabic direct translations are unacceptable, too. By comparing these English and Arabic versions, the students may reach a solution of some kind.

10- Collocations of Similes (as-as constructions)

“As beautiful as a lark”/ “as a pretty as a picture”

(أحلى من الصورة/ البدر)

“As strong as a lion/ a horse”

(أقوى من الأسد/ الحصان)

“As sweet as honey /sugar”

(أحلى من العسل/ السكر)

“As quick as lightning”

(أسرع من البرق)

“As swift as an arrow”

(أسرع من السهم/ أسرع من لمح البصر)

These similes are fixed, cultural idiomatic collocations which cannot be changed. Some are also specific to English culture and people. Yet, most of them have identical similes in Arabic, which are usually in a comparative grammatical form of exaggeration (i.e. “better

than”) rather than equal form (i.e. “something=something”). This is the first important point that students should take into consideration when translating these collocations.

The second important point is to take care of the cultural side of some of similes. For example, the bird “lark” (القبرة) is a symbol of beauty in English culture, but not in Arabic culture. The “hills” (الهضاب) are also used to imply the meaning of oldness for the English people, not for the Arab people. This cultural problem can be beaten by searching for the cultural equivalent simile in Arabic, regardless of the difference of words. That is “lark” is not used in Arabic in this context, but (صورة); (قمر); (بدر) are used instead. Therefore, we ignore “lark” altogether and use one of these three words among which (صورة) is perhaps the popular one. The students are warned against direct translation or looking for the equivalent word in the same lexical family in Arabic. That is, they might think that “lark” is a bird used in English to symbolize beauty, so they have to search for the equivalent bird in Arabic which can symbolize beauty like “nightingale” (العندليب) or the “hoopoe” (الهدهد). In a similar way, they may insist on translating “hills” into its direct meaning of (تلال / هضاب) or a similar word like “mountains” (جبال) “plateau/highland” (نجد), etc.

The solution is to ignore these words and take the whole simile as an expression of a specific cultural meaning, which should be translated regardless of the words used in the simile. That is the reason behind translating “lark” into (صورة) and hills” into (جدي) in the examples

Most of these similes have identical Arabic ones, as illustrated by the examples. On the other hand, it is possible to translate them into the same grammatical structures of equality between the two parts of each simile: (حلو مثل الصورة) “as beautiful as a lark” “as pretty as a picture”, (أحمر كالشمندر) “as red as a beetroot”. In fact, (مثل الزئبق) “as slippery as an eel” has this form only, whereas (صبر أيوب) “Job’s patience” is an exception because:

- It is a fixed, religious untouched phrase.

- It has no comparative, exaggerating form (i.e. أصبر من أيوب) for there is no “patience” greater than job’s, or even like it.

The problem facing the students with these similes is their ignorance of their equivalents in Arabic, especially the cultural ones. The solution is to try to understand the implied meaning of the simile, and translate it into Arabic in some way or another, if and when they do not know the proper equivalent simile In Arabic.

11- Parts of Countable nouns’ Collocations

E.g.: “a bouquet of flowers”	(باقة من الورد)
“A crowd of people”	(حشد من الناس)
“A flock of sheep”	(تلة من الغنم)
“A pack of dogs”	(فريق من الكلاب)
“A swarm of bees”	(سرب من النحل)

These collocations are fixed phrases. Each one is a part of a whole which can be counted.

For example “flowers” is a countable whole; and “bouquet” is a small number of flowers, and therefore, one part of that whole.

In Arabic, there are equivalent collocations, the students should insist on finding them. May be they do not have a problem with words used daily like (باقة ورد) and (حشد من الناس). However, they face a problem in finding (تلة غنم); (فريق كلاب); (قطيع أسود). The most problematic of all yet, is (خشرم (سرب) من النحل), as the word (خشرم) is quite uncommon and highly specialized in Arabic.

The suggested solution, in case that students do not distinguish the proper word in Arabic, is to use the generic word (مجموعة) or (عدد) to precede a group of anything countable (i.e. people, animals, insects, or things): (مجموعة ورد، مجموعة من الناس، عدد من الأغنام). The general word (قطيع) can be used with any group of animals, whereas (سرب) with any group of insects.

We may also limit the use of (مجموعة) to any group of people or things. Thus, we have a choice between “1” on the one hand, and “2”, “3”, “4”, on the other, from the following:

- 1-The use of (مجموعة) or (عدد) to describe a part of any countable noun
- 2- The use of (قطيع) with any group of animals
- 3- The use of (سرب) with any group of insects
- 4- The use of (مجموعة) or (عدد) with any group of people or things

As to the grammatical structure of Arabic collocations, it can be either “a noun + of + a noun” or “a noun + a noun (genitive)”. The former is applicable to all, whereas the latter is limited to some only. For example, we usually do not say (حشد ناس) but (حشد من الناس), having said that, students have not the choice between the two structures of this example.

12- Parts of Uncountable Nouns Collocations

E.g.: “an act of violence”	(عمل عنف)
“An article of clothing”	(صنف من الثياب / قطعة فماش)
“A bit (piece) of information”	(معلومة)
“A cake of soap”	(قطعة صابون)
“An item of news”	(نبأ / خبر)

These collocations are used to refer to parts of nouns which cannot be counted in English. There are similar collocations in Arabic. Yet, some nouns are uncountable in English, but countable in Arabic:

E.g.:

معلومة	→	معلومات
نصيحة	→	نصائح
خبر	→	أخبار

Therefore, they are not translated into collocations, but into one word only, for example:
معلومة, نصيحة, خبر

Some of these collocations are known to students, and therefore, easy to translate into Arabic. The word (قطعة) can be used with: زبدة , صابون, أرض, قماش and less frequently with شريحة لحم , رغيف خبز , مقطوعة موسيقية because we say لحم, خبز, (موسيقية)

The problem is, therefore, confined to the search for the appropriate word used to refer to the part of a specific uncountable noun. The solution is first to make sure that the noun is uncountable, as English uncountable nouns are not the same in Arabic e.g.: “news” (أخبار / خبر), “information” (معلومة/معلومات) etc. Second, students have to try to spot the proper word for the part of uncountable nouns, asking help from various sources including Arabic- Arabic dictionaries. When they are unable to find it, a general word like (قطعة) or (شيء من) can be used.

1.2.3. General Problems and Solutions

Translators and students face problems and difficulties in translating collocations. According to Armstrong (2005), the translation of collocations poses two main and general problems:

1. General Problems of Collocability

a- The Difficulty of Generalization

Some English words collocate with one and the same word, but they are not necessarily so in Arabic. For example, “commit a mistake” has an identical collocation in Arabic: (يرتكب) we can also translate “commit a murder” into (يرتكب جريمة), but we use (يقترف جريمة) a great deal. Yet, we do not say in Arabic (يرتكب انتحار) for “commit suicide” but (ينتحر). Thus, “commit” is not always (يرتكب) or (يقترف).

In a similar way “fat” (سمين/بدين) collocates both in English and Arabic with “man/woman” (رجل وامرأة). Nevertheless, we say only in English: “fat salary”/ “fat book”, but in Arabic we say (راتب/كتاب سمين) not (راتب ضخمة), (كتاب ضخمة/سميك)

Also we say in Arabic (بشرة ناعمة) for “soft skin”, but we cannot say (مياه ناعمة) for “soft water”, nor (مشروبات ناعمة) for “soft drinks”, but (ماء عذب) and (مشروبات خفيفة) consecutively, likewise, “soft soil” is (تربة خصبة), not (تربة ناعمة); while “soft ground” can be either (أرض (ملساء) or (أرض ناعمة).

Finally, here is a detailed list, showing the various words that collocate with one and the same word: “bright” (مشرق), to produce different collocations of different meanings:

“Bright beauty”	(جمال متألق/فتان)
“Bright child”	(طفل ذكي/ بارع)
“Bright colors”	(ألوان زاهية)
“Bright face”	(وجه وضاء)
“Bright future”	(مستقبل زاهر)
“Bright idea”	(فكرة براقعة)
“Bright light”	(نور وضاء)
“Bright sky”	(سما صافية)
“Bright sun”	(شمس مشرقة / ساطعة)
“Bright victory”	(انتصار باهر)
“Bright voice”	(صوت رخيم/ عذب)
“Bright wine”	(خمر رائق / صاف)

This long list proves that words like “bright” which collocate with several different words are quite problematic for the students. Extra caution is, therefore demanded here. Fortunately, these collocations can be found in good dictionaries. Thus, students cannot generalize about the meaning of a word which collocates with different words. It can be different from one collocation to another and from one language to another.

b- Variability of Collocations

Different collocations for the same meaning can exist in English, but they have one collocation and one single meaning in Arabic:

e.g.: “commit a mistake/ make a mistake”	(يرتكب خطأ)
“Go on a visit/ pay a visit”	(يقوم بزيارة)
“Hard task/ daunting task”	(مهمة شاقة)
“Empty task/ idle task”	(كلام فارغ)

Usually, these equivalent collocations have one and the same translation in Arabic. Students need not have different translations for equivalent English collocations, or else they may commit mistakes. For example, they need not translate “make a mistake” and “commit a mistake” into (يعمل/ يصنع خطأ) and (يرتكب خطأ) respectively, for both mean (يرتكب/ يقترف خطأ). Yet, if there are equivalent collocations in Arabic, they can give them, bearing in mind that anyone is suitable to translate the synonymous English collocations:

Eg: “deep sleep”	(نوم عميق)
“Heavy sleep”	(نوم ثقيل)
“Fast sleep”	(سبات عميق)

Any version in Arabic can translate all the English collocations.

2. Flexibility of Collocations

Some types of collocations are flexible. That is, they can be interrupted and separated in the middle by a word, especially an adjective. Usually, the following types can be interrupted:

a- Adjective + Noun Collocations e.g

“Black market” → “black illegal market” (سوق سوداء غير مشروعة)

b- Verb + Noun Collocations e.g

“Exert an effort” → “exert a great effort” (بيذل جهدا عظيما)

c- Noun + Noun (the of- genitive) Collocations e.g

“Association of ideas” → “Association of some ideas” (تداعي بعض الأفكار)

d- Noun + Verb Collocations (names of sounds) e.g

“Bees buzz” → “bees strongly buzz” (دوي النحل القوي)

e- Verb + Preposition Collocations e.g

“Long for” → “Long so much for” (يشتاق كثيرا لـ)

3. Solutions for the Translation of Collocations

The following is a summary of the possible solutions for the translation of English collocations into Arabic suggested by Ghazala (1995):

1-Tracing the identical collocations in Arabic, if and when available

2- In case that an identical collocation is not found in Arabic, a close collocation can be suggested. For example “straying sheep” is (غنم قاصية) but when students cannot get it, they can suggest a close alternative like (غنم شاردة).

3- When “1” and “2” are not possible, a suitable collocation in Arabic can be suggested: two words for two words, three for three, etc. “shock enormity”, to take one example, is (الصدمة الهول). When students do not know that they may suggest a two – word collocation of their own, such as (قوة الصدمة), (تأثير الصدمة), (ضخامة الصدمة), etc

4- If none of the previous solutions is at the students’ disposal, a translation of the correct meaning of the collocation is an acceptable resort. It does not matter whether it is translated into, one, two, three or more words. For example, “alive and kicking” (حي يرزق) can be translated into: (صحته على ما يرام), (بصحة جيدة), (ما يزال حيا), (على قيد الحياة), etc. The grammatical structure of the English collocation is ignored completely, here.

5- A direct meaning should be translated into a direct meaning, and an indirect meaning into an indirect meaning in Arabic (especially the collocation of similes). For example, it is not advisable to translate “as swift as an arrow” into a direct meaning as (سريع جدا), but into an indirect meaning as (أسرع من لمح البصر/أسرع من البرق/أسرع من السهم)

6- If the English collocation is colloquial; it can be rendered into a colloquial Arabic collocation, if possible. Yet, using formal Arabic is quite acceptable for example, “smashing victory” is rather colloquial, and can be translated into a colloquial Arabic collocation: (انتصار هائل). However, the formal (انتصار ساحق) is feasible.

7- When students are unable to find a solution, they escape with a blind, direct translation which may result in a wrong, funny Arabic version. For example, “hard currency” is (عملة صعبة) but if it is translated into (عملة قاسية), it will sound strange and funny. Likewise, “brain drain” cannot be translated into (تصفية الأدمغة) because it is unclear and may bring to mind irrelevant dimensions of meaning in Arabic.

Generally speaking, in the Arabic translation of collocations we should insist as much as possible on the collocations:

1. Fixedness / flexibility.
2. Grammatical structure.
3. Directness / indirectness
4. Clarity / unclarity
5. Formal / colloquial style
6. Simplicity / complexity
7. Context
8. Familiarity / strangeness

Conclusion

The interest in translating collocations comes from their great importance in language. They play a vital role in the coherence of the structure of language. They are also the source of its attraction and special flavour. As collocations vary from one language to another, students are required to be extra sensitive, cautious, and highly interested in spotting the proper collocation in the target language when available. This specificity of collocations affects negatively the translation process and creates problems for students and translators alike in finding the adequate equivalents, especially between two extensively separate languages and cultures such as English and Arabic.

Chapter Two

Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodology used to investigate the validity of the hypothesis. It begins with the description of the sample and the collection of the data through a test about the translation of collocations. In addition to that, it analyses the data and the results obtained, and shows the students' familiarity and unfamiliarity with English collocations, and their awareness in taking the meaning into consideration when they translate.

2. Methodology

2.1. The Sample

The two parts of the test were given to a sample of Master I students of English (Applied Language Studies) in the English Department, Mentouri University, Constantine. The sample consists of a group of thirty (30) students chosen randomly. It is a homogeneous group of boys and girls, whose age varies between 21 and 25 years old.

2.2. Description of the Test

In order to collect data and get necessary information, two parts were elaborated. The first part consists of three questions about the students' background knowledge about collocations which they have dealt with in semantics in the third year. The first question is to give a brief definition of collocations. The second question is to cite at least three types of collocations. The third one is whether the students use dictionaries or not when translating in general, and when translating collocations in particular.

The second part is divided into two tasks. The first task consists of ten (10) English expressions to be translated into Arabic, in order to check the students' familiarity with English collocations. The second task consists of ten (10) Arabic expressions to be translated

into English, in order to check the students' ability to find the correct collocations in English. Each expression of both tasks is considered as one type of collocation.

2.3. Data Analysis

2.3.1. Part 1: Test of Knowledge

This part is a practical one since it aims at examining the students' knowledge about collocations, and consists of three questions.

The first question is to give a brief definition of collocations. Most of the students have answered this question, and their answers can be gathered into three groups:

- 1- Collocations are compound words which occur together. Ten (10) answers (33.33%)
- 2- The collocation is the combination of two words or more which expresses a specific meaning. (Eight (8) answers (26.66%)).
- 3- Collocations are fixed expressions which exist in any language as they are. (Seven (7) answers (23.33%))

The second question is to cite at least three types of collocations. It seems a difficult question because more than half students have not answered it at all (53.33%), the others did not get the right answer (43.33%), and we have just one relevant answer which is:

- Two nouns, adv + prep, v + n

The third question is whether the students frequently rely on dictionaries or not when they translate in general, and when translating collocations in particular, and if yes which type of dictionary they use.

The following table represents whether the students rely on dictionaries or not when they translate:

		score	percentage
1-those who rely on dictionaries		23	76.66%
Kinds Of Dictionaries	monolingual	10	33.33%
	bilingual	05	16.66%
	trilingual	02	6.66%
	Specific dictionaries	06	20%
2- those who do not rely at all		07	23.33%

Table 1: Frequency of the students' use of dictionaries

The subjects' answers are divided into two groups:

1- Those who do not rely on dictionaries are seven (7) students; four (4) of them have not explained the reason, but the others have explained that the collocations are specific words and they have to guess the real meaning by relying on their background information, which means that they do not need to use any specific kind of dictionary.

2- Those who rely on them are twenty three (23) (76.66%). According to their answers, some students rely on monolingual English dictionaries in order to check the appropriate meaning of a particular word or expression. Other students rely on bilingual dictionaries: English/ Arabic or Arabic/ English in order to make sure that their translation is correct. However, others use trilingual dictionaries such as: English/French/Arabic when they do not find an equivalent word or expression in the two other kinds of dictionaries.

The rest of the students and are ten (10 students) have mentioned that when they translate collocations or other specific items, they rely on dictionaries specific to collocations, idioms, and phrasal verbs in order to get the equivalent translation.

2.3.2. Part Two

2.3.2.1. Task One

The first task consists of ten (10) English collocations. The subjects were asked to translate them into Arabic. This task enables us to check the students' familiarity or unfamiliarity with English collocations. These collocations are chosen according to their type (i.e. each expression represents one type of collocation).

The following table shows the familiarity and the unfamiliarity of the ten (10) English collocations given in the test, represented with scores and percentages:

English Collocations	Number of students		% of familiarity	% of unfamiliarity
	familiar	unfamiliar		
1-Raging storm	25	05	83.33%	16.66%
2- Pass a law	08	22	26.66%	73.33%
3- Death sentence	12	18	40%	60%
4- The heart of the matter	29	01	96.66%	3.33%
5- Means and ends	06	24	20%	80%
6- Alive and kicking	10	20	33.33%	66.66%
7- Secretly and publicly	26	04	86.66%	13.33%
8- Cats mew	28	02	93.33%	6.66%
9- A protest against	03	27	10%	90%
10- As quick as lightning	30	00	100%	00%
Total	177	123	59%	41%

Table2: Frequency of students' familiarity with English collocations

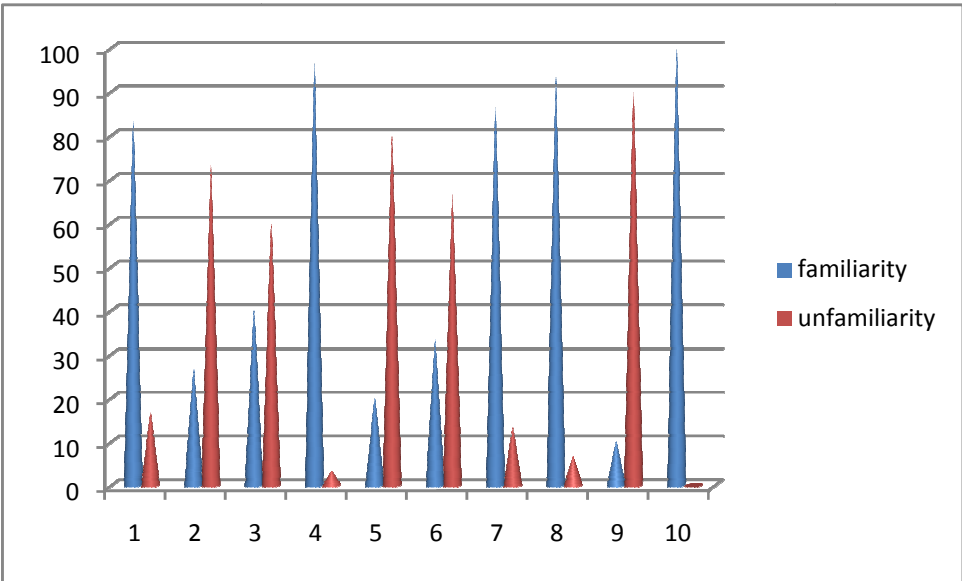


Figure 1 : Frequency of students' familiarity with English collocations



Figure 2: General percentage of familiarity with English collocations

2.3.2.2. Results

- “Raging storm” is (an adj + noun) collocation; it seems an easy collocation to students, since twenty five (25) have the correct translation (83.33%), the others represent 16.66% including three no answers and 2 one word translation: (عاصفة). Its equivalent Arabic version is عاصفة هوجاء; however, when students did not find the proper Arabic equivalent collocation, they just translated it into another correct and suitable translation as they have done. Instead of عاصفة هوجاء, they use other expressions such as: عاصفة قوية، إعصار هالك أو مدمر.

- “Pass a law” is a (verb + noun) collocation; its equivalent Arabic version is يسن قانونا. This expression is familiar just to eight (8) students (26.66%), and unfamiliar to twenty two (22) students (73.33%) including four (4) no answers. The students have to spot the suitable verb in Arabic however, when it is difficult they can translate it into its meaning as some students have done by giving the following translations: يصدر قانونا، يفرض قانونا instead of يسن قانونا for the others they have translated it into: يعبر القانون which is a literal translation of the verb “pass”, or into: يخترق القانون، يخالف القانون، ينجح في القانون، يتعدى على القانون

- “Death sentence” is a (noun + noun) collocation; its equivalent Arabic translation is حكم بالإعدام. The students have to avoid literal translation in order to get the proper equivalent

collocation in Arabic. Twelve (12) answers are correct (40%). Eighteen (18) are completely wrong translations (60%) including two no answers. Among their translations: جملة ميتة، جملة جملة here, the students do not know the proper equivalent collocation in Arabic, that is why they just translate the noun “death” into مينة أو بلا معنى . In this expression, the students have to use all available resources when they do not know the proper equivalent translation.

- “the heart of the matter” is a (noun + noun (the of-genitive)) collocation; its equivalent Arabic translation is جوهر الشيء . It seems a very known expression, since twenty nine (29) translations are correct (96.66%). The students use different nouns in their translations such as: الموضوع أو الشيء. Others translate it into its equivalent Arabic translation by keeping the identical grammatical structure of the English collocation such as: أساس الأمر، بيت القصيد

- “means and ends” is a (noun + and + noun (addition)) collocation. Its equivalent Arabic translation is (الوسائل والغايات). Six (6) translations are correct (20%), and twenty four (24) are wrong (80%) such as: وسائل ونهايات، البداية والنهاية. Here, the students translate the word “ends” into (نهايات) which is a literal translation, and thus leads to a mistranslation.

- “alive and kicking” is an (adj + adj) collocation. Its equivalent Arabic translation is حي يرزق. Ten (10) have the correct translation (33.33%), and some of them have not kept the same grammatical structure, but they have conserved the meaning, for instance: بصحة جيدة ، والموت، حي حي ومهمش ، Twenty (20) translations are completely irrelevant (66.66%) such as: here, the students have definitely ignored the meaning of the adjective “kicking” , and have given wrong translations.

- “secretly and publicly” is an (adv + adv) collocation. Its equivalent Arabic translation is سرا في السر والعلن or علانية. This collocation is easy to translate even if it has a different grammatical structure in Arabic. Twenty seven (27) translations are correct (90%)

- “cats mew” is a (noun + verb) collocation (names of sounds). Its equivalent Arabic translation is مواء القطط . It seems a very known collocation since twenty seven (27) have the equivalent Arabic translation (90%). In this type of collocations, the students have to be able to recognize the sound of the animal or the insect required in Arabic. However, it is possible to use the word صوت as a general word to describe any specific sound as two students have done; for instance we can say صوت القطط instead of مواء القطط which is a possible solution.

- “a protest against” is a prepositional collocation that consists of a noun “a protest” plus a preposition “against”; its equivalent Arabic translation is احتجاج على . According to the students’ translation, only three (03) are correct (10%), the other twenty seven (27) are wrong (90%) because of the misuse of the preposition “against”. Many students have used the preposition (ضد) which is a literal translation instead of (على). The students should be aware of the direct translation of the preposition, and have to spot the suitable preposition after the noun in Arabic which depends on the students’ increasing interest in Arabic prepositions and their unusual use in context.

- “as quick as lightning” is a collocation of simile (as – as construction); its equivalent Arabic translation is أسرع من البرق . These types of similes are fixed, cultural idiomatic collocations; they cannot be changed. Some are also specific to English culture.

2.3.2.3. Task Two

The second task aims at testing the students’ competence in producing English collocations through translating specific Arabic collocations. This task consists of ten (10) Arabic collocations.

The following table shows the students’ translations of these Arabic collocations which are classified into acceptable, unacceptable translations, and no answers. The results are represented by scores and percentages:

N/	Arabic expressions	Acceptable translations		Unacceptable translations		No answer	
		score	percentage	score	percentage	Score	percentage
1	انتصار ساحق	18	60%	08	26.66%	04	13.33%
2	يدير شركة	27	90%	01	3.33%	02	6.66%
3	هجرة الأدمغة	27	90%	03	10%	00	00%
4	ساعة الحسم	05	16.66%	09	30%	16	53.33%
5	الخير والشر	28	93.33%	00	00%	02	6.66%
6	بصحة وعافية	11	36.66%	10	33.33%	09	30%
7	بالتمام و الكمال	05	16.66%	10	33.33%	15	50%
8	نباح الكلاب	24	80%	01	33.33%	05	16.66%
9	مقدما	07	23.33%	14	46.66%	09	30%
10	أقوى من الأسد	23	76.66%	05	16.66%	02	6.66%
General percentages		58.33%		20.33%		21.33%	

Table3: Frequency of students' acceptable and unacceptable translations

2.3.2.4. Results

The above table shows that there are 175 acceptable translations (58.33%), 61 unacceptable ones (20.33%) and 64 no answers (21.33%) from a total of 300 translations.

The fact that the percentage of the acceptable translations of Arabic collocations from Arabic into English is higher than the unacceptable ones proves that some collocations are already known by the students such as: *يدير شركة، هجرة الأدمغة، الخير والشر* in which we get more than 90% of acceptable translations. However, some collocations seem to be strange to them such as: *ساعة الحسم، بالتمام و الكمال* where the correct translation does not exceed 17% because the students do not know these collocations in Arabic; therefore, they are unable to get their equivalent translations in English. We can take, here, *ساعة الحسم* as an example where most of

the students have not translated it at all. The second example is بالتمام والكمال ; its equivalent English translation is “wholly and heartedly” which is a combination of two adverbs. However, most students have translated it into one adverb only such as: exactly, fully, and perfectly. The results show that some translations are acceptable and others are unacceptable translations; for instance, the equivalent English translation of (بصحة وعافية) is “healthy and well” is a combination of two adjectives. The half number of the students have translated it into healthy and well, the others have translated it into healthy which is an incomplete translation because it is only one adjective.

Some translations of the previous Arabic collocations are to some extent considered acceptable (i.e. semi acceptable), though they are mentioned on the table as unacceptable translations. For instance, the equivalent English translation of (ساعة الحسم) is “the hour of decision”. Some students have translated it into “the exact hour, the hour of truth, and the important hour”. Another example is the Arabic expression انتصار ساحق; its equivalent English translation is “smashing victory”. Some students translated it into total victory, complete victory, and extreme victory. All these attempts are to some extent acceptable, but they do not reach the proper equivalent translation.

If we combine the results obtained from the second column of the previous table (i.e, unacceptable translations) with the results of the third column (i.e, no answers), then we compare the general results with the results of the first column (i.e, acceptable translations), we get the general results as the following figures show:

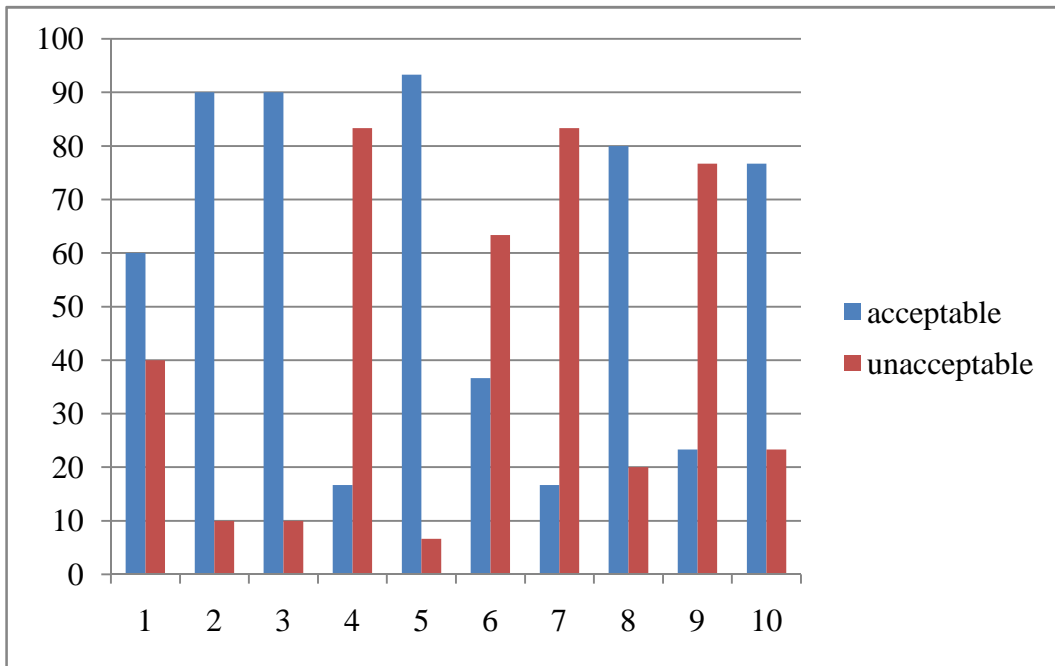


Figure 3: Frequency of the students' acceptable and unacceptable translations

The numbers 1, 2, 3 ..., 10 → refer to the students' translations of the ten Arabic expressions.

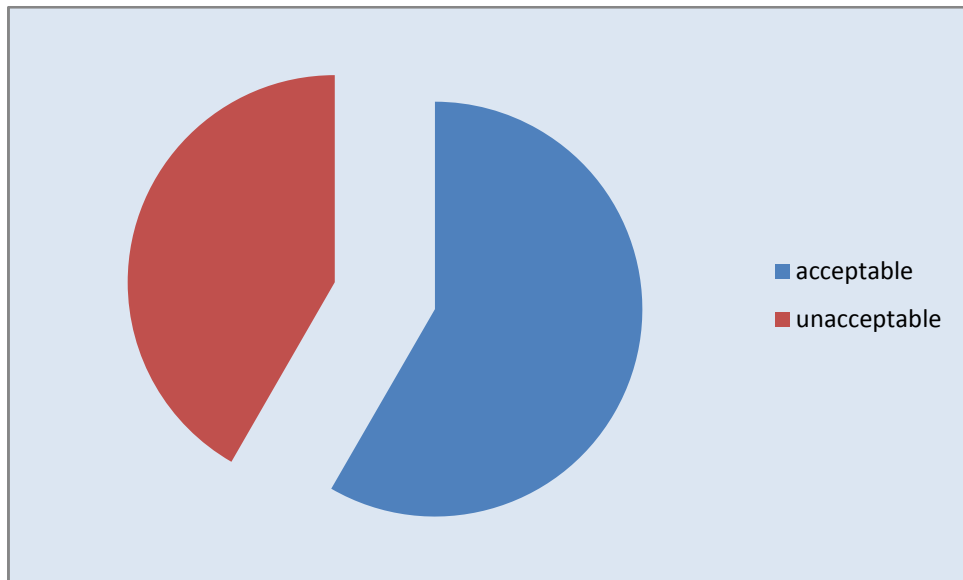


Figure 4: General frequency of students' acceptable and unacceptable translations

2.4. Causes of Mistranslation

The students' mistranslations of English collocations are analysed according to the methods used in their translation. The results are given in the following table:

N/	English collocation	N/ of correct translations	Students' mistranslation	N/ of mistranslation	C.M
01	Raging storm	20	عاصفة ممتدة	02	B.K
02	Pass a law	03	إعطاء قانون خرق القانون تمرير قانون	01 09 04	B.K B.K L.M
03	Death sentence	12	جملة ميتة جملة مفرغة جملة غير مفيدة	06 04 04	L.M B.K B.K
04	The heart of the matter	22	بيت القصيد سبب المشكل	01 03	ST.AR B.K
05	Means and ends	06	وسائل ونهايات البداية والنهاية	10 02	L.M B.K
06	Alive and kicking	09	الحياة والموت/حي وميت حي ومهش	07 06	B.K B.K
07	Secretly and publicly	26	سري ومعروف	01	R.L.C
08	A protest against	03	احتجاج ضد معارضة ضد	08 07	R.L.C R.L.C
09	As quick as lightning	23	سريع جدا في لمح البصر	02 01	B.K ST.AR

Table 4: Frequency of students' mistranslations

- C.M Causes of mistranslation
 B.K Background knowledge
 L.M Literal meaning
 ST.AR Transfer of standard Arabic
 R.L.C Restricted linguistic competence

Type of causes	Number of mistranslations	Percentage
L.M	20	25.64%
ST.AR	02	02.56%
R.L.C	16	20.51%
B.K	40	51.28%
% of all mistranslations	36.33%	

Table 5: Frequency of the students' mistranslations causes

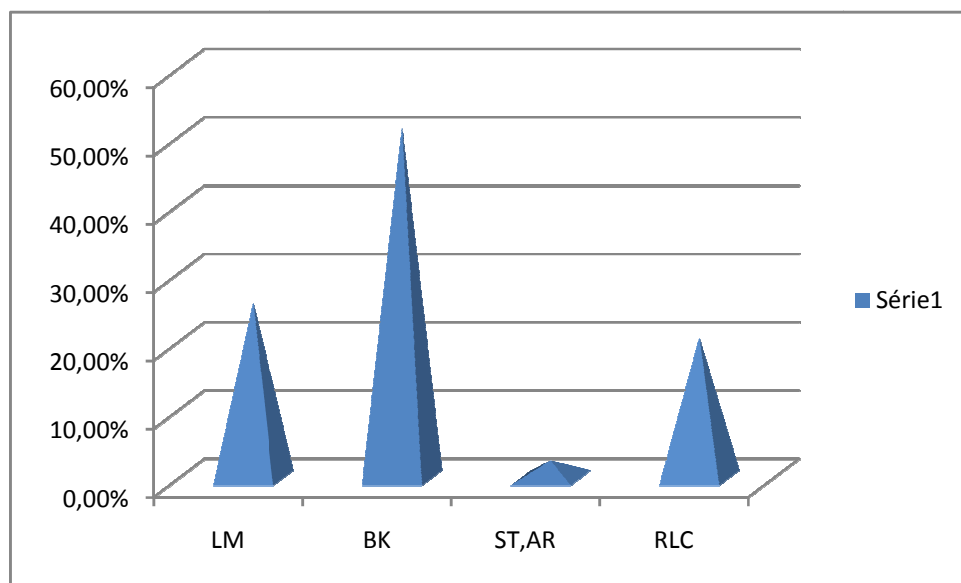


Figure 5: Frequency of mistranslations' causes

The results show that the main cause of students' mistranslation is background knowledge (51.28%), followed by literal meaning (25.64%), and then restricted linguistic competence (20.51%). The least frequent cause is transfer from Standard Arabic with a low percentage of 2.56%.

These results prove that the main causes of students' mistranslations are related basically to their background knowledge. The pre-existing knowledge has the great share in students' translational competence. So, understanding collocations, as the other fixed expressions, require wide cultural knowledge. The second cause is related to the literal meaning which leads to mistranslation because collocations cannot be translated on word-by-word basis. The third cause is related to the feature of restricted linguistic competence. The students' translational competence, at the linguistic level, has to be improved through an extensive practice and teaching translation as an interlingual and intercultural communication in both types of discourse (written and spoken discourse). The last cause is related to transfer from Standard Arabic. Although it is the least frequent cause, it can be a serious one. Since Standard Arabic is learnt at an early age, it influences the process of learning foreign languages.

2.5. Comparison between the Results of Task One and Task Two

The first task is about translating ten (10) English collocations into Arabic. The results show that 59% of the students are familiar with these collocations and the other 41% are unfamiliar with them. The second task is about translating ten (10) Arabic collocations into English. The results show that 58.33% are acceptable translations, whereas 41.66% are unacceptable ones.

If we compare between the results of the students' familiarity with English collocations and the acceptable translations of the Arabic collocations, we get approximately the same general percentage (59% Vs. 58.33%)

Similarly, if we compare the results of the students' unfamiliarity with English collocations and the results of the unacceptable translations of the Arabic collocations we get again approximately the same general percentage (41% Vs. 41.66%)

The following figure shows the result of the two previous comparisons illustrated with general percentages:

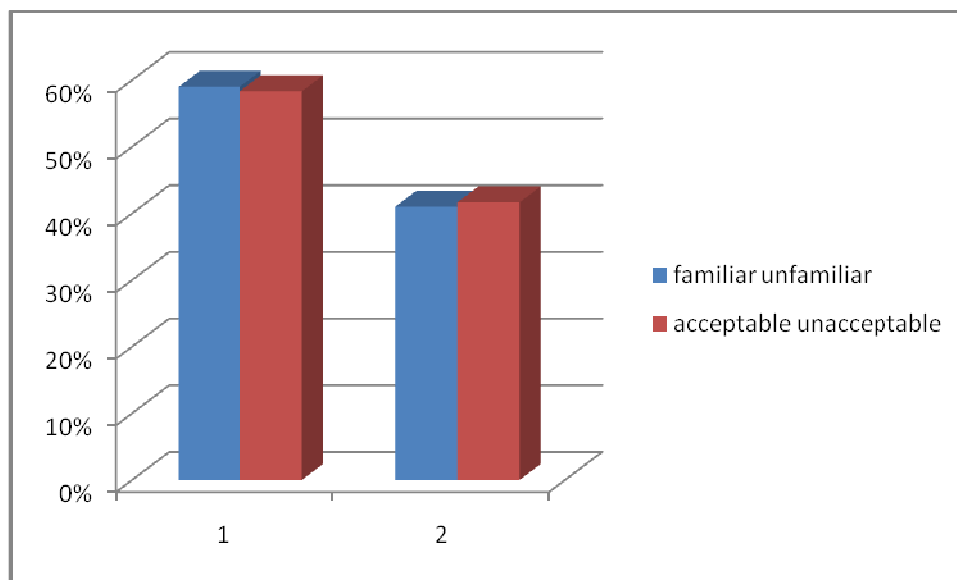


Figure 6: Comparison between familiar-acceptable translations and unfamiliar -unacceptable translations

2.6. Results

The analysis of the two tasks of the second part shows that the general percentages obtained in both tasks are approximately equal. We can deduce that the students are not familiar enough with English and Arabic collocations. The results prove that some collocations are common ones (i.e, already known). This leads us to say that students deal only with common collocations that are frequently used.

1 → refers to the first comparison between familiar English collocations with acceptable English translations.

2 → refers to the second comparison between unfamiliar English collocations with unacceptable English translations.

The students' unfamiliarity with English / Arabic collocations reflects their failure in translating them and finding their equivalent translations. The students' failure in producing an equivalent translation in both languages is due to various causes such as insufficient background knowledge, restricted linguistic competence, literal translation, and the use of the inappropriate strategy used during the process of translation.

Conclusion

The analysis of the results obtained from the two tasks of the test shows that the students are facing problems in translating different collocations from and into their mother tongue because of the specificity and the variability of the collocations. In addition, students want to deal with common collocations and avoid dealing with uncommon ones or use wrong ways which lead them to mistranslation. If the students master well the two languages and submitted to an extensive programme in translation, including the translation of collocations, they would enhance their translational competence.

General Conclusion

Translators have attempted to achieve the ultimate objective of spotting the most recurrent and important problems of translation faced by students as well as translators in practice, notably in translating collocations. The latter are notoriously difficult for non-native speakers to translate for several reasons. First, they are opaque and cannot be translated on a word-by-word basis. Second, they belong to a specific culture and language which cannot be easily understood by the non-native speaker. Last, students of English, as foreign learners, do not give enough importance to English collocations.

The problem in translating collocations has been meant to cover in broad terms all the problem areas of the subject of translation, which demands more careful attention from students and translators in general, and ignoring them would result in mistranslation, and / or the loss of a part of the meaning. Thus, students have to undergo various programmes in translation during their study, and to give enough importance to collocations and other vocabulary elements.

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Appendix

The test

Part 1

1-Give a brief definition of collocations:

2-Cite at least three types of collocations:

3-Do you frequently rely on dictionaries when you translate, notably in translating collocations. If yes, what kind of dictionary do you use?

Part 2

-translate the following expressions into Arabic:

- 1-raging storm
- 2- Pass a law
- 3- Death sentence
- 4- The heart of the matter
- 5- Means and ends
- 6- Alive and kicking
- 7-Secretly and publicly
- 8-cats mew
- 9-a protest against
- 10-as quick as lightning

-translate the following expressions into English:

- 1 انتصار ساحق-
- 2 يدير شركة-
- 3 هجرة الأدمغة-
- 4 ساعة الحسم-
- 5 الخير والشر-
- 6 بصحة وعافية-
- 7-بالتمام والكمال
- 8-نجاح الكلاب
- 9-مقما
- 10-أقوى من الأسد-

Résumé

Le but de cette étude est d'avoir quelque perspicacité de l'attention des étudiants de collocations et les différents problèmes auxquels les étudiants peuvent faire face en traduisant les différents types de collocations. Nous essaierons de tester et d'évaluer leur attention par examiner leur traduction de collocations de la langue Anglaise à la langue Arabe, et vice versa. L'étude fait par un test divisé en deux parties. La première est une épreuve de connaissance dans laquelle les étudiants répondent à trois questions séparées et basés sur leur connaissance de base sur les collocations. La deuxième partie est la traduction de collocations de l'Anglais à l'Arabe et vice versa. Les résultats de cette recherche révèlent deux causes principales des erreurs d'étudiants dans la traduction des collocations. Premièrement, les étudiants adoptent la traduction mot à mot comme une méthode principale dans leur traduction. Deuxièmement, les étudiants ne donnent pas assez d'importance aux collocations qui appartiennent à une autre culture et à une autre langue.

En conclusion, la traduction des collocations est une affaire linguistique et culturelle et n'est pas une question de mots remplaçant par leurs équivalents dans l'autre langue.

ملخص

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو معرفة مدى اهتمام الطلبة بالمتلازمات اللفظية ومختلف المشاكل التي قد يواجهونها عند ترجمتهم لمختلف أنواعها. سوف نحاول اختبار وتقييم مدى اهتمامهم عن طريق امتحان ترجمتهم للمتلازمات من اللغة الانجليزية إلى اللغة العربية والعكس بالعكس. أجريت الدراسة من خلال اختبار مقسم إلى جزأين. الجزء الأول هو اختبار للمعرفة ومن خلاله يجب الطلبة على ثلاثة أسئلة منفصلة معتمدين بذلك على مدى معرفتهم للمتلازمات اللفظية. والجزء الثاني هو ترجمة المتلازمات اللفظية من اللغة الانجليزية إلى العربية والعكس. كشفت نتائج هذا البحث عن سببين رئيسيين لأخطاء الطلبة عند ترجمتهم للمتلازمات اللفظية. أولاً اعتمادهم على الترجمة الحرفية كمنهج رئيسي للترجمة وثانياً عدم إعطاء الطلبة أهمية كافية للمتلازمات اللفظية التي تنتمي إلى ثقافة والى لغة أخرى. الملخص العام هو أن ترجمة المتلازمات اللفظية هي مسألة لغوية و ثقافية وليست مسألة استبدال الكلمات بمقابلاتها في اللغة الأخرى.