Syntactic and Semantic Interface in Translating Methods & Writing Techniques

Baseel A. AlBzour[a],*; Naser N. AlBzour[b]

[a]Assistant Professor of Linguistics & Translation Studies, Dept of English Language and Literature, Al AlBayt University (AABU), Mafraq, Jordan.
Ph.D., Linguistics & Translation, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, USA.
[b]Assistant Professor of Linguistics & Translation Studies, Dept of English Language and Literature, Al AlBayt University (AABU), Mafraq, Jordan.
Ph.D., Linguistics & Translation Studies, Purdue University, USA, 2011;
Ph.D., Applied Linguistics & TESOL, Washington University, USA, 2003.
*Corresponding author.

Abstract

This paper is a culmination of long years of daily observations of the two researchers' joint experience while teaching a plethora of linguistics, translation and writing courses at KSA Teachers' colleges and Jordan universities. To guarantee the conformity and the heterogeneity of results, the analysis presented in this study is strictly confined to data derived from 120 writing and translation assignments submitted *only by BA English students whose performance is good, very good and excellent.* Therefore, this paper primarily explores and highlights major issues that explicitly exhibit aspects of syntactic and semantic interface in TEFL classes. The researchers have identified various methods and strategies that Arab students usually resort to while developing their translation/writing skills. Many of these writing strategies are based on various translation levels and techniques while translating from their mother language into English as a result of overt similarities or differences between the source language and the target language in terms of *syntactic structures* and semantic relations pertaining to their *lexical choice*. Noticeably, these strategies turn to be fruitful in many cases where the SL system and the TL system slightly diverge while they prove to be fully ungrammatical, odd and even absurd in other instances where there is an abyss of syntactic and semantic differences between these two systems.

Key words: Syntax; Semantics; Translation; TEFL; Interference; Lexical Relations; Core Structure

INTRODUCTION

The researchers have been teaching dozens of English courses at various levels. It has been substantially noticed that a strong correlation both syntactically and semantically has obviously surfaced as students try to develop writing skill in TEFL classes; such correlation can be traced and spotted in many instances of translation classes as well. This is an interesting field to be deeply examined by other future works because such issues simultaneously reflect the role of negative vs. positive interference of mother tongue while training translators as well as the significant implications that such analyses may reveal concerning teaching English as a foreign language. To achieve the basic goals of this study, the researchers have administered four writing and four Arabic-to-English translation assignments with 15 samples of each session, so a total of 120 samples have been administered, collected, categorized and accordingly analyzed. Poor students and low achievers were excluded to focus on congruous levels that may reflect homogenous performance and thus to avoid any problems that can be caused by oddities and extraneous factors that can be beyond the scope and the objectives of this study.

Historically speaking, Arabic is a Semitic language, so it goes without saying that it shares many linguistic features with other Semitic languages such as Hebrew,

Acadian, Mesopotamian, Canaanite and Aramaic, morphologically rich languages *par excellence* indeed. Therefore, Arabic syntax, morphology and semantics do interact in a unique manner (Gibb, 1927). Admittedly, there are many Arabic dialects and sub-dialects that usually converge and sometime diverge at all linguistic levels: Carene, Levantine, Iraqi, Gulf Bedouin, Yemeni, Hijazi, and West African. This being the case, the extremes marking each of the two ends of the scale as portrayed by linguistic differences between Jordanian Bedouin and Casablankan dialect might be compared by analogy to German and Middle English, both descendants of Indo-European Germanic origins. However, Standard Arabic is a common denominator that the all Arab countries have in common since it is the language of their religion, official education, legal jargon as well as the huge bulk of proliferating mass media. More interestingly, in Jordan, there exist five to eight *major* dialects, most discernible of which are the following: Northern Dialect, Southern Dialect, Bedouin Dialect, Ammani Dialect and Amalgamated Palestinian Dialect. To avoid any dialectal dispersion and to narrow down the scope of analysis, the data used in this paper, therefore, strictly owes a specific reference to Standard Arabic (SA) as such.

1. LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR

It has been the prime concern of linguists, in general, and syntacticians, in particular to account for a universal premise that best describes language under a unified universal umbrella despite the substantial differences among world languages. This linguistic interest has been crucially crystallized since Chomsky set the distinct features of such universal grammar in his ambitious enterprise, *Syntactic Structures,* in 1957, and hence all through the past six decades where different complementary and sometimes clashing theories have emerged to solve the riddle that Chomsky spurred because this idealized manifestation, i.e. grammar "is often extended in Chomskyan theories to encompass the whole knowledge of language in the individual's mind", (Cook & Newson, 2007, p.7).

Hence, it is quite legitimate to further extend our perspective to cater for any potentially linguistic oriented analysis whether it be within the domain of syntax, semantics, morphology or pragmatics towards our ultimate quest for such an integrated paradigm of linguistic competence. Consequently, this begs the question of the feasibility and the necessity of applying such assumptions to languages such as Arabic although substantially parametrical factors can explicitly intervene. This paper can be, therefore, a modest endeavor that explores an important area of interface between translation theory and teaching/ learning English as a second language, in general and mastering writing skill, in particular. Hence, the results of such a study may give

deep insight into the real nature of the problem that many Arab students encounter while developing their writing skill at different levels. This may require us to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach towards reaching better understanding of such tentative problems; of course, this approach does not ignore the theoretical premises of contrastive analysis, error analysis and translation theory pertaining to various domains of linguistics such as syntax, semantics, pragmatics and discourse analysis.

Teaching English as a foreign language is one of the most eminent milestones of the educational system in most Arab countries, and it has been of so significance for many decades. In these countries, the students usually start learning English at the elementary stage through the preparatory and the secondary stages; this clearly mounts to a long span of time ranging between six to eleven years. Technically, this is a relatively long period of time enough to learn and master any foreign language. Nevertheless, it is frequently observed that the outcome is barely satisfactory in all language skills because every couple of years or every decade at best, educators and education planners adopt a new approach of teaching this language and exclude the other approaches. What we really need is to develop a comprehensive perspective that takes into account incorporating all these methods and approaches together without any dogmatic attitude for or against any of them. Nasr (1980, p.125) wonders "There is no reason why all four language skills cannot be taught together right from the beginning. As a matter of fact, in school classes this seems to be very desirable".

2. TRANSLATION & TEFL

2.1 TEFL Classes

Nasr (1980), Zohrevandi (1994), et al. have explored a dozen of approaches that have been experimented and methods that have been in use over half a century such as the Word Approach, the Phrase and Sentence Approach, the Reading-Grammar-Translation Approach, the Direct Approach, the Structural Approach, the Audio-Lingual Approach and the Communicative Approach. Most recently and mainly during the past five years, the Eclectic Approach has been diffidently implemented at some schools, but it has not been officially and schematically adopted yet. In principle, this approach aims at incorporating the merits of all the previous methods and approaches together and to take the advantageous points of each to be duly implemented by teachers according to the resources available there and the specific needs of students in every class, with equal emphasis on the four language skills. This can be very conducive if it would be exhaustively and deliberately administered.

There is no doubt that thousands and thousands of writing books and articles have been published in these fields independently; needless to say that greater numbers

of publications have tackled the field of translation as such from linguistic, anthropological or philosophical perspectives without referring to subsequent pedagogical relations and implications. Therefore, there has been always an unjustifiable clear segregation between those studies dealing with writing and those studies in the domain of translation. Unfortunately, each field seems to operate alone by itself as if they belonged to different or even hostile entities. Therefore, it is truly beneficial to establish and enhance some converging grounding while studying writing as a complementary field within a translational framework. As such, Zohrevandi (1994:186) tackles this state of alienation and thus he expounds that "translation can play a valuable role in TEFL among other techniques and activities and can vitally assist communication to flow more freely, creatively, and enthusiastically in the language class".

Many theoreticians and practitioners in relevant writing studies concur that writing is one of the most difficult skills to master. This unique difficulty emanates from the various prerequisites that constitute the foundations of high mastery of this productive skill where many elements such as vocabulary, grammar and unity of ideas pour together into the essence of such a basic skill. Arab learners of English demonstrate unique strategies in the first place while developing their writing skill, and this springs from the fact that they are more or less trying to imitate what they have in their mother tongue. This may complicate or facilitate the teachers' tasks because they need to handle a juxtaposition of two languages that sometimes converge and sometimes diverge fully or partly. This is why TEFL and Translation should be incorporated as Abu-Jarad (1994, p.190) advocates in his neat proposal, "We clearly need broader programmes to train EFL students in translating coherently and intelligibly on the wide range of topics".

Pedagogically, language learning has been examined thoroughly from a wider perspective of Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis. Usually any error committed while learning a foreign language is automatically ascribed to the negative interference caused by the mother tongue; consequently, these errors can be predictable, (Duskova, 1969; Angwatankul 1976; Arabski, 1979; *et al*). Hence, Corder (1967) conducted some instrumental advances in the field of error analysis, which is basically concerned with second language acquisition. Thus, he maintains that the learner acquires any second language through a means of testing the hypotheses of the SL in comparison with the TL. In this case interference would seem inevitable. However, Brier (1964), Selinker (1966), and Nemser (1971) concur that such a transfer between the foreign language and the mother tongue is a selection process, but it is not inevitably an automatic process. Furthermore, Lado (1957) was one of the most prominent advocates of the *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis*; therefore, he persistently argues, "We can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student", (*ibid*, vii).

Oscillating from one approach to another in the Arab World is the main reason of uncertainty and cumulative ill-performance. Although translation-encoded techniques and translation-oriented methods had been severely fought against at some stages in the past five decades, they have returned to gain strong validity in language classes today. Tudor (1987, p.270) believes that "translation as the process of conveying messages across linguistic and cultural barriers is an eminently communicative activity". Thus it can be explicit how and why Zoherevandi (1994, p.182) assertively maintains that "Instead of struggling for a full avoidance of their native language, learners should be allowed to use it to express their opinions and feelings about the ongoing written or oral discourse". This can be of greater benefits especially when the two languages match at certain linguistic or cultural levels.

2.2 The Act of Translation
Approaching the very act of translation from his applied linguistics perspective, Catford (1964) believes that translation is a straightforward matter embodied in a quest for similar structural and textual units that can be equivalently between one language and another. Therefore, his assumption is critically based on the notion that languages consist of textual forms that can or might be equally shared by other languages. This might be true to a certain extent, but it lacks comprehensive validity in some other cases where syntactic forms are often different although we may find similar functions or even the same, so we basically need to consider both forms and functions among languages as well. Newmark (1981, p.7) stresses that "Translation theory is not only an interdisciplinary study, it is even a function of the disciplines". Therefore, he maintains further that "Translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language". This may sound of some beneficial impact as far as translation and writing are concerned.

Translation and writing proper are logically so affiliated because translation is ultimately a process of re-writing, (see Anderson, 2002). Many professional translators outright state that they intend to relay both the informative as well as the pleasurable respects of the TLT once they initiate any professional translation enterprise. The choice in many cases seems more sophisticated than the simple choice of mere re-writing. One of the most important things to be considered by good writers, consequently, is how to be fully aware of their lexical choices and flow of ideas and the ultimate message to convey before finalizing any relevant task. The translator basically aims at achieving an optimal

translation as possible as he/she can although it can be unattainable sometimes because "An optimal SL\TL transfer of a text presupposes an exhaustive analysis of the text to be translated in its syntactic, semantic, stylistic and pragmatic dimension." (W.Wilss, 1982, p.118). In the same vein writing does pursue this optimal goal when overall evaluation of mastery levels and requirements are critically in question.

To elucidate this interconnectedness further in our argument, it is essential to fathom the real nature of writing *per se* with reference to all that has been examined so far. Gebhardt and Rodrigues (1989, p.14) believe that "writing is a way to explore material, a way to discover insights into subjects. Many of the most important processes in writing take place, invisibly and very privately inside the writer's mind". This can lead us to perceive the dilemma of thinking while writing using the TL or the SL. Abu-Jarad (1994, p.190) , one of the proponents of translation in the classroom , responds that "learners will be using the translation process in any case, at least implicitly, to mediate between their 'thinking' and the target language, and this mediation will diminish as the language becomes familiar".

2.3 Syntactic Evidence

One needs first to consider the simplistic nature of the English sentence depicted in the syntactic dichotomy of the *kernel sentence* as opposed to the *derived sentence* as explained by many scholars (Lyons, 1957; Cook, 1985; *et al*). Technically speaking, the kernel sentence in English is basically a simple, declarative and active sentence. This automatically generates the other derived pattern of sentences such as compound or complex, negative or interrogative and passive. Nida (1969, p.39), who started his professional career as a structural morphologist, semanticist and syntactician before making his enormous contributions in translation studies as well, assumes that "languages agree far more on the level of the kernels than on the level of the more elaborate structures". Intuitively, these sentence patterns and similar syntactic manifestations do exist in Arabic although some minor parametrical structures may surface now and again.

The most distinctive syntactic feature that reveals the sentential disparity between Arabic and English is embodied in the fact that Arabic is both a VSO and SVO language where as English is definitely an SVO language. Even the SVO pattern, which might look as the English pattern can be differently generated in Arabic according to the type of the predicate. Therefore, many translational drawbacks can be expected while the students write in English. Consider the following pair of sentences:

(1) a. *al lissu saraqa al mujawharat.*
    (Def. thief steal Pst Msc. Def jewelry Pl.)
    The thief stole the jewelry.
    b. *saraqa al lissu al mujawhart.*
    (steal Pst Masc. Def thief Def jewelry Pl.)

*Stole the thief the jewelry.

Unlike English, it is absolutely acceptable to produce both (a) and (b) in Arabic while maintaining the same propositional content; the only difference is that starting a sentence with the nominal element "the thief" gives more emphasis to the doer of the action unlike the verbal pattern which moves the emphasis to the action itself as a logical discoursal result of topicalization. In many cases, Arab learners of English tend to produce (b) more often than (a) because they often mistakenly think that English may allow the occurrence of this pattern as it is the case in their native language. This translational interference is detrimental and can be spotted in many writing samples.

Additionally, it is always noticed that Arabic permits different kinds of nominal sentences that contain no overt verbs as it is evident in equational sentences; this can be observed clearly in the following:

(2) *alwaldu ?aneequn.*
    (Def. boy elegant Msc.)
    a. (*The boy handsome.)
    b. The boy is handsome.

We absolutely know that it is ungrammatical to have such a pattern in English as in (2.a), so the copula "be" should be used. However, one can find strict matchability between Arabic and English in some similar sentences when they contain a linking verb such as seem, look, *etc*. Thus, such positive interference can be realized and justified in TEFL classes when such sentences are produced:

(3) *alwaladu yabdu ?aneeqan.*
    (Def. boy seem Sg Prst elegant Msc.)
    The boy seems handsome.

Another related problem that frequently emerge as a result of structural impact when pseudo-interrogative forms are tackled in cases of indirect questions. In Arabic, the word order does not change whether the question form is direct or indirect while in English what distinguishes these two forms is the structural configuration that results from *Aux-movement* in direct questions and zero-movement in indirect counterparts. Indirect questions in English entail no subject-verb inversion as it can be seen in the following:

(4) *ayna al kitabu? (direct question).*
    (where Def. book?)
    a. *Where the book?
    b. Where is the book ?
(5) *la adri ayna al kitabu. (indirect question)*
    (not know Prst 1st Prsn Sg where Def. book?)
    a. **I don't know where the book*)
    b. I don't know where the book is.

Consequently, this can be one of the most common mistakes in students' writings, and it can be easily anticipated and systematically corrected if the teacher is fully aware of the symptoms of the malady.

Another area of additional syntactic problems can be traced in cases of using and misusing conditional

structures. By and large, conditional clauses lead to the expansion of simple sentences into complex ones. The conditional concept is universal and it thus exists in both Arabic and English. Traditionally, there are three types of conditional sentences in English: type one, two and three. Each type differs in terms of form and function, i.e. syntactically and semantically. Many subordinators can be used to express this relation, but the most common one known to most students is the conditional subordinator 'if'. Let us consider these conditionals:

(6) a.*itha\in adafta al mal'h ila al ta'am sayusbih ta'muhu sayyi'an.*

 (if add you SG Def. salt to Def food, become Futr taste its Sg bad)

   *if add you salt to food, become taste its bad)
   If you add much salt, the food will taste bad.*
   b.*law yadrus hatha al kasool , fa qad yanjah.*
   (*if study Prs Sg Msc this lazy Msc, might he pass)
   **If studies this lazy, might he pass)*
   If this lazy student studied hard, he would pass.
   c.*law darasa, lanajaha.*
   (if study Pst Sg ms 3ʳᵈ Prs, emphatic passed he)
   **if studied he , emphatic passed he)*
   If he had studied, he would have passed.

As it can be obviously perceived in a glance at Arabic conditionals, the same function and meaning can be expressed only by altering and using different conditional particles, i.e. '*in-*' and '*itha*' with type one and '*law*' with type two and three, while one needs to change the verb forms whether it be the main verb or the auxiliary modal in English as well. Such syntactic hiatus usually results in serious grammatical problems in TEFL classes. Of course there is a wide variation of forms and additional realizations in Arabic in this connection, but they are beyond the scope of our analysis and impertinent to the results obtained from the students' writings. This can be ascribed to the fact that many Arab students do not master that level of formality of using their standard Arabic; subsequently, such structures have not been reflected in their performance.

2.4 Semantic Evidence

This part is primarily dedicated to some dynamic aspects of meaning concerning semantic concepts that have been obviously encountered throughout the researchers' incessant observations in translation and writing classes.

2.4.1 Homophones

The term 'homo.phone' by definition means that two words are similar and identical in sound; this one sound represents two distinct lexemes. This phenomenon is almost universal and it exists in both Arabic and English but with different manifestations and relative frequency. It would create some problems at the orthographical level, thus incurring lots of spelling mistakes by EFL students. Consider the following pairs:

 (7) *(meet & meat), (peace & piece), (tail & tale), (steal & steel), (wait & weight), (week & weak), (made & maid), (led & lead) and (liar & lyre).*

In English, homophonous forms frequently occur in isolated pairs of word forms as it's obvious in (7), so two words have exactly the same sound but different orthography. However this can sparingly occur in Arabic because if two separate words have the same sound, they must have the same orthography; this means that we have one word not two. This mismatch between Arabic and English engenders such frequent spelling mistakes in this regard. Nonetheless, homophony when connected or adjacent units at the morpheme-boundary or at the word-boundary can be more frequently experienced in Arabic:

 (8) annasu **thahabu** liman 'indahu **thahabu**.
 (People *go* Pst 3ʳᵈ Psn Pl to him who has gold InDef)

People went (are attracted) to the one who has gold.

It might seem that there is no problem at this level because the Arabic homophones cannot be mixed with the English ones. This can be partly true, but in fact Arab students have a problem when they want to pick up one item of any of the English pairs.

The extra orthographic presentation of some English words, or in other words the silent sounds or the sounds that can be pronounced in exception to the general rules may lead students to translate their native orthographic system and apply it to the English choice. Hence they would end up with 'I have *red* the book' instead of 'I have *read* the book'; many times it happens.

2.4.2 Homonyms

Homonymy, strictly speaking, refers to the phenomenon of having two words with the same sound and form, but originally or etymologically they belong to different dictionary entries. Therefore, these pairs or groups of lexical items might look one although they have two different meanings as it can be seen in (9):

 (9) a. bank (financial institution) & bank (river)
   b. book (to be read) & book (reservation)
   c. wood(frenzied) & wood (trees)

In English, there are hundreds of examples of this sort while in Arabic only few examples can be found:

 (10) a. saleem (in a good health) & saleem (snake-bitten person)
   b. hadeed (iron) & hadeed (stallion)

Because few cases can be found in Arabic, most Arab students seem unfamiliar or confused when they encounter this phenomenon in English. Hence, whenever they need to use one of these homonyms in English they get puzzled because they seem doubtful about the possibility that one item has the same spelling of the other word that they are familiar with, so they may opt for other choices to avoid mistakes as in 'reserving a ticket 'instead of 'booking a ticket' because they are well-acquainted with and sure about *book* to 'read' but not to 'reserve'. This kind of avoidance happens somehow frequently in many writing samples.

2.4.3 Polysems

This concept refers to a relatively similar case as in homonyms but with one basic distinctive component. In homonymy, there is no sense relation between the two words where as there is a close sense relation in the case of polysymy because the two words originally belong to the same word entry and at a time they were one word, (see Lyons, 1977: Plamer, 1981; *et al*). What makes them look as if they were two words is the fact that the original word has undergone a process of semantic change and thus has acquired new senses or different shades of meanings due to continuous metaphorical extensions, (cf. Cruse, 1986; lakoff, 1987; Geerarts, 2010; *et al*). As a result, this word might develop to be deemed two by the passage of time. Here are some examples:

(11) a. head (of a human being) & head (of a delegation)

b. eye (of a human being) & eye (of a needle)

c. foot (of a human being) & foot (of a page)

c. back (of a human being) & back (support)

e. mouth (of a human being) & mouth (of a cave)

As it can be noticed, the items of each pair in all cases are closely related. As a matter of fact, they have undergone some sort of broadening of their meanings, so they have acquired such extra metaphorical meanings. This phenomenon of metaphorical mapping is cognitively universal (Lakoff, 1981) and thus vividly employed in Arabic, so we can find hosts of such cases. In all the above English cases, one can find the same Arabic counterparts used literally and metaphorically as well except for 'foot of a page' which might look absurd when translated literally into Arabic, so the logical result encountered in Arab students' English writing is 'the tail of a page'. This would leave the students at ease to translate many expressions literally from Arabic into English, and they can end up with fruitful and creative results in many cases although it happens to be the otherwise when incidental differences show up.

2.4.4 Synonyms

Synonymy refers to the phenomenon where two words share a similar or almost the same meaning. Many semanticists have studied this phenomenon, yet there is no unanimously strict distinction between all types and categories of synonyms and their distribution .By and large, some categories can be introduced with the acceptance of the majority of linguists. Generally speaking, what applies to English definitely applies to Arabic in terms of basic taxonomies, mainly, *Absolute Synonyms, Cognitive Synonyms, Near Synonyms and Cognitive Near Synonyms.*

Semantically, absolute synonyms entail perfect synonymity between two lexical items such as (sofa & couch). As a matter of fact this can be refutable because there are certain characteristics such as usage, interchangeability and frequency that can make them different in addition to their different etymological origin.

Therefore, one can say that this type of synonyms does not exist because if two words are to be identical in every respect, this will necessarily lead one of them to be abandoned. No students' mistakes at this level have been noticed. However, students are usually in a sheer state of perplexity when it comes to cognitive synonyms because of the high degree of synonymity such pairs of lexical item exhibit.

This type is so common in both Arabic and English. Usually one can find scores of such pairs that appear to have the same dictionary meaning. Because of this apparently presumed sameness, many mistakes occur while using these synonyms. Many foreign learners think that these words can be used interchangeably because the native equivalence does not always prove any difference in this regard. The differences between these synonymous pairs can be only detected by native speakers and specialists or in a contextualized material concerning degrees of formality and appropriateness of certain registers or even dialects. Sometimes, this type might cause indeterminacy even for some native speakers of the mother language. Therefore, a few linguists would classify some cognitive synonyms as absolute ones as it is the case in the following pairs: *(hide & conceal), (miserly & stingy), (courageous & brave), (lofty & high), (perfect & complete), (profound & deep) and (fetch & bring).* In most cases, the learners feel less decisive when they try to use such patterns of closely related meanings because they have learned and memorized the Arabic meanings for these words without paying attention to the minute differences between items of each pair, so no wonder that some students would repeat '*profound water' instead of 'deep water' simply because the same Arabic word '? amaaQ' can replace either of these English words in these two instances and in other instances where 'deep' can replace 'profound' in English such as 'deep concern' and 'profound concern'.

The problem is evident yet less serious in the case of near synonyms which operates at the level of some shared similarities between two words but not to the extent that they might be confused with cognitive ones by native speakers or good foreign learners as it can be exemplified in the following pairs: (determine & decide), (speak & chat), (do & make), (tear & smash), (house & home) and (storm & winds). Some Arab students face some problems when they encounter such choices. In fact, this area is less problematic to students because the distinctions between the items in many pairs can be made if the students take the pains to check an English- Arabic Dictionary without the need to consult an English- English one to find any intricate shades of meanings in common. Semantic flaws resulting contextual cognitive synonyms can be the least problematic although they sometimes occur; however, the context itself can explain the meaning of the word used in such situations. Therefore, it is common to have sentences such as "He went to the store to buy some milk", "He

went to the store to bring some milk" and "He went to the store to get some milk".

2.4.5 Idioms and Collocations

These two domains are of the most knotty problems that reveal the lack of students' competence and proficiency while learning a foreign language because they are language-specific and sometimes culture- specific. Collocations are these words that linguistically and exclusively co-occur together where as idioms represent a case where some words work together to express one meaning– sometimes related and often irrelevant to the meaning of each constituent in isolation depending on the degree of opacity or transparency of such expressions. Therefore, there is an essential common feature between idioms and collocations in terms of their unique idiomaticity of meaning. This idiomatic meaning and co-occurrence is hardy interpretable in many cases, and this is one of the most distinguishing an appealing traits of the innate beauty of language.

Arabic and English are so replete with such fixed expressions. Because of this specificity, erroneous and clumsy choices are expected in the writings of such foreign learners. The outcome of incorporating the collocatability and idiomaticity of certain words can be applicable to short phrases and expressions to the wider proverbial level where some cultural specificity can be added to the linguistic ones. Thus, it is not unusual to detect many pitfalls resulting from pseudo-matching between English and Arabic such as 'squadron of airplanes' and 'squadron of birds' as well as 'herd of cows' and 'herd of sheep'. Scrutinizing such collocations and idioms, one can realize that there is a unique unexpectable system that governs the relationship between these collocated words, so this often causes an inevitable problem. Arab students tend, for example, to use 'a squadron of ants' or 'a squadron grasshoppers' by analogy because the Arabic word 'sirb', which is equivalent to 'squadron' collocates in Arabic with other groups of things or animals. On the other hand, some other students tend to take the safe side by using the word 'majmoo?a', i.e. 'a group of' to refer to any of these groups as a kind of avoidance strategy.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the researchers do reiterate that translation is predominantly an art that requires a professional skill to be honed and so is the skill of writing. These two skills are closely interrelated at various linguistic levels and aspects. Learners of any foreign language usually tend consciously or unconsciously to employ some methods and techniques inherent to their mother tongue while developing their FL writing potentials. There are obviously a few cases where a noticeable degree of matchability occurs in many of the students' writing samples both syntactically and and semantically. In some cases, extremely absurd outputs can be found as a result of translating from the source

language although in some other cases students do succeed in producing the exact or at least a close rendition based on predictably positive interference of their native tongue. Therefore, much attention should be paid to the intricate realization of syntactic-semantic interface when it surfaces as a result of implementing translation techniques and methods; thus pedagogical implications and indications can be appropriately set, analyzed and catered for.

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