

An Overview on Interference in Translation

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ملخص:

يعتبر أغلب منظري الترجمة التداخل علامة تنم عن مترجم سيئ لأنه يمكن مستقبل الترجمة من إكتشاف أن النص قد تعرض لعملية الترجمة بأقل جهد منه، وها ما تعتبره دراسات الترجمة ومنظروها أسوء ترجمة، وللتداخل أشكال وصور عديدة لكلها آثار على الترجمة يتفق عموما على أنها سلبية ويراهها الأقلية من المنظرين في الآداب بشكل عادي أو ظاهرة جمالية أحيانا.

ABSTRACT:

Interference is considered by the majority of scholars of translation as a sign of a bad translator, as it enables the receiver of the translation to discover with little effort that the text underwent a translation operation which is judged by translation studies scholars as well as the worst translation, interference indeed has several types and they have all impacts on translation agreed generally to be negative one and narrowly by some literary scholars as an ordinary or aesthetic phenomenon.

Interference is the strange use/application of mother tongue rules or any acquired language at the end product. One of the most influential factor which leads to this phenomenon is the **influence**. Linguistically speaking, the term **transfer** has different meaning in contrast with translation, and its general idea which is accepted by all

linguists is that **transfer** refers to the phenomenon of **influence** which leads, **not always**, to the emergence of problems in languages teaching of foreign one. More specifically, Terence Odlin (1989) has defined transfer as “transfer is the **influence** resulting from similarities and differences between the TL and any other language that has been previously acquired” (p.27). The two mentioned terms, similarities and differences, play a crucial role in distinguishing two types of transfer. Firstly, similarities which are related to the rapprochement of languages families. As known, German, English, Greek, Italic, Celtic and so many other languages originated from the Indo-European family. The previous mentioned languages have one main basis and rules, but across the time differences come to light between them. As a result, similarities can facilitate foreign language learning within the same language family. All of what is mentioned before refers to what is called **positive transfer**. Secondly, differences occur between different language families. As known, Arabic is originated from Semitic family, whereas English is from Indo-European family. In this case learning and translating processes is quite difficult than the previous mentioned one and **errors** may appear at any level. Both, Arabic and English, have their own rules which govern style, grammar, syntax ... and even cultural aspects. These problems which may appear in learning and translating are known as **negative transfer** which causes the phenomenon of interference (op. cit.). Returning back to the factors, according to the divergence between Arabic and English, even weather could affect the end product in the much talked about example of "أتلج هذا الخبر صدري". Also the religious side plays its part in the influence on the user of language. In addition to those factors, the historical events which include wars, conflicts and politics may affect the TL, and it can be observed in the Algerian dialect(s) which is/are full of **French** vocabulary.

As a result, transfer has different meaning whether in translation or linguistics, but even it does, transfer is the principle cause of interference which is the use of the properties of certain language in another one which creates an **erroneous** end product. That is why crossing the area of Error Analysis (EA) shall give a general idea to the committed errors.

1. Interference and Error Analysis

Concerning the idea of committed errors, the notion of EA is derived from the notion of contrastive analysis "CA". According to the failure of CA and the growth of its criticisms, theorists and scholars turn their investigations to the notion of error analysis "EA" which is a type of linguistic analysis which focuses on the errors committed by the learners of foreign languages and translators as well.

The **significance** of EA is to put a limit to the scope of errors. In other words, the importance of error analysis is to help teacher/language learner or translators to follow a certain strategies/methodologies to avoid the previous errors which are made by students/translators. These strategies/methodologies are divided according to the linguistic and extra linguistic levels such as: morphological, phonological, lexical, semantic, syntactic and cultural levels.

Moreover, EA can help to realize that the second language learners' errors are important to facilitate the learning process in case of **positive transfer**, and for best understanding of the process of second language learning so that attention to the type of texts leads students/translators to pay their attentions to the type of error they may fall in. In addition to this importance, Error Analysis diagnoses the performance of second language learning, and tries to polish it.

Secondly, **sources and causes** of errors can be identified according to these factors. Starting with the lack of comprehension of Source Language SL, this lack is derived from the lack of linguistic and extra linguistic knowledge. As an inference, learners and translators may fall into the influence of their mother tongue which causes interference as a phenomenon in the field of learning and translating. The competence, the inadequacy of communicative competence/performance leads learners to commit errors as well. In the other hand, as EA tackles both theoretical and practical part of learning process, practically speaking, the overgeneralization of rules of the Target Language TL may lead to the misuse and errors in the end product. Hence, errors are produced not only from the negative transfer, but also from the overgeneralization of TL rules which affect learners/translators (Richards, 1973)

2. Interference and translation

Discussions and investigations about interference occupy the field of translation. Dealing with the influence of either SL or TL on the translators leads to the appearance of the phenomenon of interference at the end product as problem in the field of translation. More specifically, interference leads to a problematic, **not always**, at the end product. In fact, as a general idea about interference within translation it could be as the importation of SL features into the TL, the influence of MT thinking on the end product, confused or brought more than one meaning because of the over use of word for word translation and without caring about the types of equivalence which any translators should choose. Furthermore, interference could be as the use of unusual expressions which are not belonging to the TL. Moreover, interference is the influence of MT, at the first rate, or any acquired language which influences translators and his way of thinking. On the same hand, readers of the end product cannot even understand parts of the translated text which is affected by this influence which lead to interference.

Eg: "between the blue devil and the Dead Sea"

If it is translated as

”بين الشيطان الأزرق و البحر الميت“

And be given it to any student of Arabic literature, he/she cannot understand anything. Moreover, Newmark (1991) conducted the research on interference and claimed that interference is the inappropriate expressions which are brought by any features of the SL or any acquired language including syntactic structures, lexical items, an idiom, a metaphor or word order translated literally without caring about the style and the conditions of TL. In addition, interference may appear even with punctuations, proper names, neologism or cultural words. As an example of interference within punctuation which includes this translations which bring more than one meaning:

Example	Translation with interference	Translation
لنأكل جدي،	let us eat grandfather	Let us eat, grandfather

As mentioned, interference can bring more than one meaning. From another hangle, the phenomenon of interference is psychological and cognitive features which happened in the translators' brain as one of the crucial problems of transfer. As results, the borders of this phenomenon are quite ambiguous to put a limit to it because each translator has his/her view on how the end product or the translated text could be. Because of this ambiguity, Baker tackles and puts rules as law of interference as a phenomenon connected to the color substance used as an improvement of the TL, and realization of the interference depends on the professionalism of the translators/readers which, the professionalism, is governed by the socio-cultural conditions (Baker, 2009). So, the more experienced and professional translators are, the more avoidance of the phenomenon could be. As mentioned before, these professionalisms could take place when the translators cover all the aspects of, both, TL and SL.

Newmark (1991) argues that distinction should be made between two terms interference and **translationese**. The term translationese refers to an area of interference which occurs as error due to the over use of literal translation. This, translationese, leads to the ambiguity of the meaning and inaccurate use of SL features within the TL or the end product. Moreover, this area of interference can be seen as an error due to the ignorance and carelessness about TL characteristics. Interference could emerge too even in the same language families as English and French. In this case, interference is clear in the notion of false friends. More clearly, the more differences between languages the more errors and interference could appear if not well mastered. On the other hand, Newmark focused, in some cases, on the interference as positive aspect when any writers/translators present his/her language into the TL; it means to make his/her language features more known and to transfer the SL knowledge to be universal. In addition to the term translationese, Guy Cook has suggested another term which refers to interference as well. **Word for Wordism** which is a textual phenomenon, which is the over use of word for word translation which leads to an incorrect grammar or worst. More specifically, Cook has defined word for wordism as “privileging the lexical and syntactic levels, translating each word in the same order as it occurs in the original” (Cook, 2010, p.98). In general, Cook has focused his

investigations on the term interference as an error in the textual forms. Returning back to the notion of interference, as an error, leads to the emergence of counter operation which is the process of linguistic purification in translation which is the process of polishing the end product and as a solution to avoid interference, translationese and word for wordism.

In this case both SL and TL keep their charm and authenticity. Moreover, another suggested example which explains how translators fallen down in the over use of word for word translation:

Example	Translation with interference	Acceptable translation
صدق أو لا تصدق.	believe or do not believe	believe it or not

As mentioned before, an extra investigation tries to shed light on the boundaries of interference and the role of translator which may affect the end product. It looks like that only translators who are beginner, and in what extent they master, both, cultural and linguistic aspects of TL and SL can lead the end product to this phenomenon, but many theorists and scholars have different view of the impact of interference on the translators. At one hand, Kussmaul argued that “we can observe interference both in novices and in advanced translators” (Kussmaul, 1995, p.17-18), while Malkiel claims: “identifying the differences between novices and professional translators has been a major concern of Translation Studies...training and experience contribute to translation quality, such that trained, experienced translators will generally produce higher-quality translations than untrained, inexperienced translators” (Malkiel, 2006, p.338). Generally speaking and in addition to Nida claims, the notion of interference could appear in both cases, but the more translators are qualified, professional and trained the more they are away from this phenomenon.

Interference can be then seen as an error or mistranslation in the process of translation, whereas in certain situations other theorists see it as a positive aspect. In addition to the complete cover of cultural and linguistic aspects of TL and SL, categorizations of the equivalence by many theorists and the appropriate choice

of them play a crucial role of being away of the interference as an error or mistranslation.

a. Types of interference

There are many types of interference. Newmark (1991) claims: "In translation, there are various degrees of interference, and its appropriateness depends partly on the type of text that is translated; in literary work, both ideological and cultural interference often enrich the translation" (p.78). Linguistic items are contained in cultural aspect, and each linguistic system is governed by extra linguistic items also.

i. Extra-linguistic Interference

Mainly Cultural interference, culture refers to the shared knowledge, beliefs, way of thinking which are governed the communication in certain community. More specifically, culture is that elusive concept which comprises beliefs, art, moral, and habits which are acquired by any experience within a certain community. So, culture has crucial role in the communication and the way in which a certain speech community interact.

The combination of the two concepts, interference and culture, leads to say that cultural interference is any strange and incomprehensible end product which cannot meet the TL cultural requirement according to the wrong application of extra linguistic features of SL to the non-corresponding TL extra linguistic features. That is why Kussmaul (1995) argues: "Translators have to be aware of the fact that readers' expectations, their norms and values, are influenced by culture and that their comprehensions of utterances is to a large extent determined by these expectations, norms and values" (p. 70). In the same hand, the cultural gap between Arabic and English for instance leads the translators, who are unaware of the English culture, to likely fall into the cultural interference. Nida (1964) has classified the extra linguistic items as the following: political, social, religious, material and ecological, and according to these classifications and the previous one, examples and illustration are given to make the cultural interference clearer.

Secondly, within the **rules which govern both countries**, translators cannot recognize the role of many hidden items which translators should take them in account.

In addition to the mentioned categories, the **religious** side plays its role in affecting the end product. Islam has its own properties, whereas Christianity's are different.

ii. Linguistic Interference

Any linguistic system has its properties and differences according to the level of rapprochement or distance of any language to another. Indo-European languages have a lot of linguistic features in common, whereas the Indo-European and Semitic languages have major linguistic differences, that is why translators should be aware, not only for the cultural aspects, but also of the linguistic system of both SL or TL. Moreover, as a general example of the differences, Arabic is VSO in its sentence combination, whereas English is SVO. A linguistic interference can be defined as the translator's attraction to use features of his/her native language in his/her attempt to translate from one language to another, or the application of unacceptable linguistic norms already found in the SL into the TL due to the ignorance by the translators and little linguistic affinity between Arabic and English. Moreover "linguistic interference refers to the intervention and reflection of the repertoire, rules and norms of special language in the international performance of MT" (Pym, Shlesinger and Simioni, 1984, p.34). As an inference, linguistic interference, depends on the degree of separation, may occur in all levels of language which involve: morphological, phonological, syntactical, lexical, and pragmatic levels.

1. Phonological interference

Phonology refers to the study of sounds in particular language or in languages. Regardless to different rules of intonation, stress and so many other phonological aspects at one hand and the different number of consonants, vowels and diphthongs between Arabic and English, phonological interference could be as the transfer of those phonological rules from SL into TL which cannot meet the TL requirements. Such transfer cannot appear in written text such as journalistic articles, but the process of transliteration, which is when "the translator replaces each SL letter or other grapho-logical unit by a TL letter, or other unit" (Catford, 1965, p.66), can show the phonological interference at the end product as well by borrowing letters from the **English** into the **Arabic**.

2. Lexical interference

As interference the lexical interference appear in the level of separated words during the translation process, or even when translators are unaware about the nuance meaning and the different meaning of certain words. In this case, translators should check dictionaries to be sure about the correct use of the correct equivalences. From another side, lexical interference can be defined as the translation of words or lexical items (words, phrasal verbs, collocation, idioms, proverbs...) from the mother tongue into its counterpart in the foreign language which results a deviant or unintended meaning. As mentioned before, the lack of knowledge about the target language text leads to this phenomenon that is why Kassmaul (1995) stated that “Learners of foreign language and translators are often not aware of the fact that words might have more meanings than the meaning they know” (p. 20).

a. Level of Words

Within the same area and going ahead to different kinds in which words can be affected by the lexical interference, the first kind is when any translators translate a sentence items without recognizing the correct equivalence.

Example	Inappropriate trans	Correct trans
إختطف الإرهابيون الطائرة الماليزية	The terrorists kidnapped the Malaysian plane	The terrorists hijacked the Malaysian plane

b. Level of Collocation

In addition to the previous type of lexical interference, another kind is the most prominent proponent interference in the level of lexis which is the interference at the level of collocation. Firstly, the term collocation refers to the combination of two or more words which usually occur side by side. The combination of these words may appear as (noun+adjective), (verb+noun), (noun+noun), (preposition+noun) and so many other types, these, collocations, may create problems while translating them. The next example show the lexical interference which may appear in the level of collocations.

Example	Translation with interefrence	Translation.
ليلة بيضاء	a white night	sleepless night

c. Level of Proverbs

First of all, the term proverb refers to a short sentence or phrase usually known by many people which is commonly experienced by certain culture such as giving advice or telling a truth. Moreover, the example which contains the misuse of "believer" and "fox" can show that lexical interference may appear in level of proverbs as well. In the same time, not all proverbs and its mistranslations can be categorized as lexical interference; they may classify as cultural interference.

d. Level of Idioms

In addition to those mentioned types of lexical interference, idioms play crucial role in the emergence of this level of interference as well. Before starting, the term idioms refer to a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning. That is why translators should focus on the meaning rather than the separated words different from the meanings of each word understood on its own. As mentioned, a fixed order and particular meaning lead to the appearance of lexical interference in the end product.

e. Level of Proper Nouns

Firstly, the term of proper nouns refers to the names of a particular person, place or object that spelt with capital letter. A lot of novice translators translate the proper nouns by using transliteration without knowing that they have a different equivalence in the target text. The following list shows the unacceptable and the acceptable translation of some of them.

Proper noun	Translation with interference	Translation
أريحا	Areha	Jericho
إبن رشد	Ibn-Rochd	Averroes
جزر القمر	Moon islands	Comoros

There is interference between levels and types of interference that is shown in the phonological, cultural and lexical interference. On the other side lexical interference hits and breaks down the meaning of separated words in whatever lexical items appear due to the over use of formal equivalence. In other words, lexical interference leads to the emergence of unforgivable mistakes in the end product and at the semantic level as well.

3. Grammatical interference

This part shall shed light on the phenomenon of grammatical interference. At first, the term grammar refers to the study and the use of the rules and how words change their forms and the combination with other words to arise correct sentences, clauses and phrases. So that, grammatical interference could be as the odd use of source language rules and structures which destroys the style of the target language. Returning back to the term grammar, grammarians divided it into two categories which are morphology and syntax. Morphology, it is the study of morphemes which are the smallest unit of language that has its own meaning such as affixes, definite and indefinite article, letters (in case of plural)... . Secondly, the term syntax means the appropriate arranging together. It is branch of grammar, which is branch of linguistics as well, dealing with the ways in which words are arranged to get the regular meaning. More specifically and as considered, syntax refers to the formation of sentence from words; it also refers to the arrangement of sentence items. So, interference, as a problem in translation, in combination with problems of morphology and syntax, can be seen when any Arabic translators apply the morphological and the syntactical rules of their mother tongue or any acquired language rather than the rules, word order and unacceptable end product which must meet the requirement and properties of source language. So that, this part shall investigate as much possible as grammatical interference could appear.

a. Definite and Indefinite Articles

Morphologically speaking, differences between Arabic and English morphological basis are numerous. More specifically, the indefinite article "A" does not exist in the linguistic system of Arabic. On the other hand, even if the definite article exists within the linguistic system of both Arabic as "ال" and English as "the", the rules which govern their uses are different as well. In English

"A" is used with countable nouns to indicate singularity, coats, speed and frequency, and it is used for certain numbers such as "a hundred", "a dozen". On the other hand, "the" is used according to this condition: when any word is repeated in the sentence, when things are known, musical instruments and unique things. But the most problematic issue is when there is no article used, in this case interference at the definite article play crucial difficulties for the translators at the end product. This can be seen in case of abstract nouns, materials, countries and towns (Walker, Elsworth, 1988).

E.g.: "بالرغم من انه بذل جهودا جبارة إلا أن نظريته لم تر النور

إلا حديثا".

Any novice translators shall translate "النور" with definite article, but the acceptable translation is:

"Although he spared no efforts, his theory did not see **light** until recently". Addition examples are shown in the next list.

Example	Translation with interference	Correct translation
الترجمة مادتي المفضلة	The translation is my favorite module.	Translation is my favorite module.

b. Word Order, Adjectives and Adverbs

Generally speaking and regardless to the emphasis in both Arabic and English, they have lots of rules which govern their word order; some English rules are just like the Arabic one, and many others are totally different. According to these differences, the phenomenon of linguistic interference during the translation process can appear. For instance, Arabic sentence consist of three types: nominal, verbal and a sentence which begin with phrase according to the semantic purpose of each one, while English sentence must consist a verb to be complete one, and it normally begin with a subject –any other types may begin with a phrase are exceptions. According to the mentioned information, translators must be aware of these orders.

In addition to the general view about word order and more specifically, English adjectives usually occur before the noun,

whereas in Arabic it comes after the noun. From another side, adjectives can occur as a series in certain order; English grammarians mentioned that four adjectives in sentence are enough to enhance the style of English language. In this case, translators should follow this order: opinion, size, age, shape, color, material, origin and purpose. In contrast, Arabic grammarians mentioned that if the noun is definite one, the followed adjective should have another noun to identify it as well.

Example	Correct translation
إشتريت سيارة فرنسية الصنع، حمراء اللون قديمة الطراز.	I bought an old, red, French car.

Thirdly, adverbs are words which describe or give more information about a verb, adjective or even another adverb. Arabic adverbs are usually positioned at the bottom, while English adverbs are quite different in dealing with its order. Firstly, there are three main types of adverbs which are **manner, place and time**, and if they come after each other, translators **must follow** the mentioned order. More specifically, these types usually follow the direct object. If there is no direct object, they usually follow the verb. Moreover, frequency adverbs are located before the main verb, whereas if there is a modal or an auxiliary they located between modal / an auxiliary and the main verb. The exception in this case is that if the verb to be appears as the main verb, adverbs must located after it.

As a result, Arabic and English are fully of exceptions that is why translators should be aware of all aspects of TT and ST. As mentioned before, the more differences between SL and TL the more interference can affect the translator and the end product as well.

c. Level of Preposition

One of the most crucial problems which caused by interference is translating prepositions. The source of these difficulties is According to the difference in the number of prepositions and the lack of a one to one correspondence between the Arabic and English prepositions. In addition, some English prepositions are not present in the Arabic language. The main problem of these ambiguity in translation lies firstly that not every Arabic preposition has definite equivalent in English and vice versa, and secondly, that not every

English or Arabic preposition has a definite usage and meaning, indicating only time or space or following preceding a certain word.

Examples	Translation with interference	Correct translation
الخاتم مصنوع من الذهب	The ring is made from gold	The ring is made of gold
في الخامس من مايو	In 5 th May	On May 5 th

d. Level of Tenses

Tenses are the forms of a verb which show the time at which an action happen. Straightforward, Arabic has only two tenses which are past and present, while English has more than twelve tenses. According to this huge divergence, it is hard for any novice translators to accomplish the appropriate end product. For instance, some Arabic translators translate the Arabic past simple tense into the direct equivalence which is the past simple tense without caring about time sequence which can show the appropriate tense which they must use at the end product. Furthermore, English rules of tenses are quite complex in contrast with Arabic one.

Eg: طرقت الباب حتى كل متني و لا أدري متى سيفتح

Translation with interference: "I knocked the door for ages and I wonder when it will open"

Translation: "I have been knocking at the door for ages and I wonder when it will open for me".

Conclusion

Translation indeed is not merely knowing two languages or that ability of moving from one linguistic system to another one but it is an operation that involves notably considering differences in expression and structure and generally speaking that worldview in order to produce a TT which comprises exactly the same charge as the one originally written taking into account all the possibilities of falling into interference that leaves the marks of other language in another one, the fact that would lead to immediate discover that the text underwent a bad translation operation on one hand, meanwhile some scholars on the other hand see and claim that interference adds sometimes an aesthetic value to the translated text.

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