Problems BA Students Face During the Process of Translating Prepositions of Movement from English into Arabic

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Abstract: Prepositions are unique closed-class grammatical forms that have syntactic and semantic qualities. They act as vital markers to the structure of a sentence and reveal the spatial, temporal, or logical relationship of their object to another part of the sentence. This study investigates the difficulties that BA students face when translating prepositions. The sample consisted of 60 students from three private universities. To achieve the objectives a translation Cloze Test consisting of 30-statements was used. The data resulting was concluded using the Level of Achievement Score. The results showed that students fail to recognize prepositions as parts of multiword expressions. Understanding prepositions involve understanding their interpersonal, textual, and ideational meaning, which requires understanding their semantic and syntactic role. There are many differences between prepositions in the way they are conceptualized in each language. It also revealed that communicative translation is one of the most successful techniques in translation.

Keywords: Prepositions of Movement, Translation Techniques, Communicative Translation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Prepositions are an important part of the English language that is used to show a relationship between two words in a sentence noun, verb, or adjective, and a noun or pronoun. According to Yule (2006) prepositions are quite short and insignificant looking but they play very important functions in expressing the relation between two entities. (Akhtar 2017,274) stated, “though how small the words are, the meaning of the whole structure of the sentence changes when there is a mistake in the use of prepositions”. (Musliyanti 2012, 2) defines a preposition as, “… a word that shows the relationship between two words in a sentence. Prepositions are always followed by nouns (or pronouns). They are connective words that show the relationship between the nouns following them and one of the basic sentence elements: subject, verb, object, or complement. They usually indicate relationships, such as position, place, direction, time, manner, agent, possession, and condition, between their objects and other parts of the sentence”.

Quirk states that prepositions are “structural phrases and that they almost belong to a language closed-set. The closed-set items belong to a class whose membership is fixed or restricted, i.e. they cannot usually be expanded by additional members being formed. Closed-set item members exhibit an interdependence of meaning and use”. (Quirk 1972, 300)

Prepositions in English are a well-known challenge for learners of English as a second language, as they are one of the most problematic areas Lindstromberg, (2010). According to (Mukattash 1985,134) “English prepositions are an everlasting problem for Arab learners of English. Indeed, they are notoriously difficult and do not cease to cause confusion and uncertainty to Arab learners even at a fairly advanced level of learning”. Due to the lack of collocational knowledge, the multi-functional nature of prepositions, and the lack of a direct corresponding preposition in the source language translators in general and students in particular encounter many problems when they attempt to translate prepositions from English into Arabic and vice versa. As Cabuk claimed (2009), some of the reasons why students encounter problems in using appropriate prepositions are that they lack a wide understanding of the context of the use of prepositions. Another reason is that they have several different functions in that the same prepositions can carry different meanings and usages. They can’t be guessed and there is no logical way of deciding which preposition goes with a particular verb, noun, or adjective. “It should be remembered that mistakes can occur not only in the meaning conveyed by words but are often hidden in details: an incorrect preposition, tense, word order, or even a comma can change the meaning of the whole sentence” (Mall, n.d., "The
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It was stated previously that the translation of prepositions poses a challenge to translators because the preposition systems in English and Arabic rarely correspond to one another. It was also mentioned that they are the most common English words and have a wide range of applications causing L2 students great difficulty in using the prepositions in English (Brenda, 2019; Mariani, 2020; Jubier, 2019; Monaikul & Di Eugenio, 2020; Premjith et al., 2019). They have a core, 'prototypical' meaning, which is normally anchored into the spatial domain” (Brala 2002,313). Prepositions have “more abstract, metaphorical meanings, which have developed from the core meaning through a process known as 'meaning extension' Zelinski-Wibbelt (1993b). They possess many interesting characteristics, as revealed by some recent studies (e.g. Zelinski-Wibbelt 1993a, Tyler & Evans 2003). One such characteristic is their largely phraseological nature. While some prepositions are selected for the independent meaning they carry, others are mainly chosen because they are phrases logically ‘bound’ to another word in the sentence. Therefore, the need for linguistic accuracy is not incompatible with the theory that in the act of translation it is imperative to transmit the correct meanings and correct messages of the original unit of meaning, to the source text. (Halliday & Hasan 1976, 2), stated "A text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning".

According to Lindstromberg (1998) prepositions are traditionally classified into three categories: prepositions of place, direction (or motion or movement), and time. Hansard (2012) classifies prepositions into two kinds according to their uses in sentences, which are for position or place and for direction. While the former is used with verbs of motion, the latter appears with verbs of condition and state of being. In English, many prepositions are used to describe both spatial and temporal relationships (Clark, 1973; Bennett, 1975; Jackendoff, 1983). Both spatial and temporal functions of prepositions may pose challenges on the part of second language learners (Kemmerer, 2005). Lindstromberg (2010) states that spatial preposition is a physical thing located in relation to another. The meaning of each preposition is spatial to describe these meanings; the trajectory (TR) and the landmark (LM) are defined. Prepositions perform three formal functions in sentences. They can act as an adjective modifying a noun, as an adverb modifying a verb, or as a nominal when used in conjunction with the verb form to be. According to Fitria (2022), they come in three different types: single preposition, phrase preposition, and prepositional phrase. (Stageberge 1971, 155) stated that “English has a set of prepositions, most common English prepositions are simple; they consist of one word only, such as: at, in, and for. Simple prepositions are short words expressing relationships, including space, time, and degree relations”. Many prepositions are more than one word, which, are called complex prepositions. One-syllable prepositions, such as: by, of, with, on, to, and with, are the most commonly used preparations.

There are a variety of two-syllable prepositions, such as about, above, after, against, within; above, behind, below, below, in, beyond; despite, excluding, in, and out. Ing Prepositions, this prepositions category “has a verb as a stem such as: assuming, starting, during, barring, concerning, considering, continuing, including, involving, and successfully” ( Stageberge 1971, 155)

According to Richard Nordquist (2019: n.d), A complex preposition is a collection of terms that functions as a simple preposition such as "apart from" or "by means of". A complex preposition is subdivided into types: 1) Two-word prepositions that can be divided into two-word sequences, the first word is an adverb, adjective, or conjunction, and the second word is a basic preposition to, and with such as apart from, as for, according to, ahead of, along with. (2) Three-word prepositions are a combination of three words acting as a single unit. Three-word prepositions consist of Simple Preposition + Noun + Simple Preposition such as: in accordance with, in addition to, in back of, on behalf of, by means of, by virtue of, by way of, for lack of. Prepositions of movement which this study is limited to show movement from one place to another place. The most common prepositions of movement include Across: movement from one side to the other side of something. Around: movement passing something in a curved route, not going through it. Away from indicating the point where a movement begins. Down: movement from a higher point to a lower point of something. From: indicating the point where a movement begins. Into: movement to
an enclosed space; movement resulting in physical contact. Off: movement away from (and often down from) something. On to, onto: movement to the top surface of something. Out of: indicating the enclosed space where a movement begins. Over: movement above and across the top or top surface of something. Past: movement from one side to the other side of something. To: movement in the direction of something. Through: movement in one side and out of the other side of something. Towards: movement in the direction of something. Under: movement directly below something. Up: movement from a lower point to a higher point of something.

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the problems BA students face when they attempt to translate movement prepositions from English into standard Arabic. To suggest the most appropriate strategies or techniques that can be used by translators. The population of the current study consisted of 60 BA students majoring in English language and translation. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researchers designed a translation test to find out the difficulties that the selected sample faced during the translation process. The test consists of 30 statements that were suitable for different students' levels. To evaluate the level of translation the researchers used the following measurements: The first one is correct translation; this is when the translation of the prepositions of movement and the contextual meaning of the statement is correct. The second one is acceptable translation; this is when the translation is carried out by using the paraphrasing technique. The third one is the wrong translation; this is when the translation of the prepositions of movement and the contextual meaning of the statement is incorrect. The fourth one is no translation; this is when the examined student skipped the translation of the statement.

4. DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

The results of students' performance in the test are presented in Table (1) below. Answers are presented in four categories: The correct answer, acceptable answer, wrong answer, and no answer. It can be seen from the results that the highest percentage is (44%) for correct answers. The percentage of wrong answers was (18%). (0.08%).

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4.1. Statement (1)

On the way, we came across an old beggar.

Suggested model answer: في الطريق صادفنا متسول كبير في السن

As shown in Table (1), only (7) students (11.67%) provided the correct translation. Meanwhile, (19) of the respondents (31.67%) provided an acceptable translation by using the Arabic equivalent (marranã ب,) مرنايب of the respondents (41.67%) provided the wrong translation for this statement. This is due to the fact that they are not familiar with the uses and usages of the prepositions in both languages. Prepositions in Arabic are syntactically different from those in English. The use and usage of a preposition may be also different in one language taking into account the semantic and grammatical factors. Some of the students translated on as (،الکأنى) على, while they should have translated it into (في), they used the literal translation of the preposition on. Meanwhile, others mistranslated the preposition across as (خالال) خلال, while they should have translated it taking into consideration across as part of the verbal phrase came across which means (صادفنا) صادفنا in Arabic. (9) Students (15%) did not provide any translation because they were confused due to the fact that some prepositions belong to many semantic categories as the word across which can be classified as an adverb or a preposition. Students faced difficulty determining which English movement preposition is appropriate in contexts where there is a shared primary counterpart in Arabic.
4.2. Statement (2)

We can get onto the bus here.

Suggested model answer: 

يمكننا الصعود إلى الحافلة هنا

Only one student provided the correct answer. Meanwhile, (36) students (60%) provided acceptable translations. (34) of the respondents (23.33%) provided wrong translation for this statement. They translated the preposition onto correctly but they faced difficulty in other words in the sentence get; Some of the students translated get into (الحصول على ) while they should have translated it into (الصعود إلى ) they used literal translation of the words. This can be related to the lack of knowledge of Arabic prepositions and their multiple uses and usages. The error detected in this statement is the result of literal translation techniques based on false analogies established between the use of certain prepositions in the students’ mother tongue which is mistakenly seen as equivalents of the preposition. Meanwhile, (9) of the respondents (15%) did not provide any translation.

4.3. Statement (3)

I followed Mr. Jackson along the corridor.

Suggested model answer: 

تابعت السيد جاكسون علي طول الممر

This statement was translated correctly by (43) students (71.67%). Meanwhile (15) respondents (25%) provided acceptable translation (أنا لحقت بالسيد جاكسون طوال الممر) which is equivalent to I followed Mr. Jackson all over the corridor. There is no need to translate I to (أنا) and only use (لحقت) because the subject I is attached to the verb (لحقت) as the letter (ت) in Arabic. This is related to the student’s injection of the rules and structures of English into their translations into Arabic which is considered as a grammatical error. Some students provided wrong translation (أنا مشيت وراء السيد جاكسون على الممر الطويل) they used wrong equivalent for the preposition along which is (الطويل) which is equivalent to the word long in English and they used (مشيت وراء) which means they used wrong word equivalent for the word follow. (Pym 2010, 5). described this case by stating "the selective moment of translating, when decisions have to be made between the available alternatives".

4.4. Statement (4)

I am going to the university

Suggested model answer: 

أنا ذاهب إلى الجامعة

In this example (52) students (86.67%) provided correct translation. This statement scored the highest percentage of correct answers. Only (2) students (3.33%) provide acceptable translation (أنا ذاهب إلى الكلية) they rendered the word university to (الكلية) which is equivalent to college in English instead of (الجامعة) which is an acceptable equivalent used by universities’ students. (5) Students (8.33%) provided wrong translation; they made grammatical mistakes using different verb tenses such as (أنا سوف أذهب) which is equivalent to (I am going to go ), or (أنا دهبت) which is equivalent to (I went). Only (1) did not provide any translation.
4.5. Statement (5)

The bathroom is to your left.

Suggested model answer: الحمام على يسارك ʔal ħmmãm ʔalã yasãreka.

This statement was translated correctly by (46) students (76.67%). On the other hand, (9) students (15%) provided acceptable translation (ʔalã yasãrak) إلى يسارك They used literal translation for the preposition to which is acceptable in this situation. Some students translated (yasãrak) like (shemãlak) يسارك and (shemãlak) شمال like (shemãl) شمال which is wrong because (ʔal shemãl) means north in English not left. This is related to the students’ insufficient knowledge of Arabic. (2) Students (3.33%) did not provide any translation. An inappropriate selection of prepositions can lead to an impression of peculiarity because it does not fulfill the linguistic expectations of the reader of a message.

4.6. Statement (6)

The ship sailed through the channel.

Suggested model answer: ابحرت السفينة عبر القناة ʔab̩ ħarattu ʔal ssafînatu ʔaebra ʔal qanãti.

In this statement (42) students provided the correct answer. Meanwhile, (10) students (16.67%) provided acceptable translation (bra) عبر. Through has many Arabic equivalents such as (bra) عبر (khelãl) خلال (min) من (bewãset) باستان but the students’ experience and knowledge helped them to choose the suitable equivalent. Only (4) students (6.67%) translated this statement wrongly; they translated through as (bettijãh) باتجاه which is equivalent to towards in English. Other students translated (channel) قناة as (nafaq) which is equivalent to tunnel in English. (4) students (6.67%) did not provide any translation.

4.7. Statement (7)

The car went through the tunnel.

Suggested model answer: مرت السيارة بداخل النفق Marrat ʔal ssayyãrátu min khelãl ʔalnafaqi.

In this example (16) Students (26.67%) translated this statement correctly. Meanwhile, (37) students (61.67) provided acceptable translation (dhahabat ʔalsayyarah min’ khelãl ʔalnafaq) ذهبت السيارة من خلال النفق they used the literal translation of the preposition through which is acceptable. Students translated the preposition as a separate entity regardless its position as part of the verbal phrase went through. (6) Students provided wrong answers by using the word (bettijãh) باتجاه which is equivalent to towards in English. According to (Campoy 2012,97) "Phrasal verbs are one of the most creative resources of the English language, since new combinations are easily created by attaching particles to verbs … and in this way, they express some new concept”.

4.8. Statement (8)

I got into the classroom.

Suggested model answer: دخلت غرفة الصف Dakhaltu ghurfata ʔalšt̓ affi.

42 students (70%) translated the statement correctly. On the other hand, (8) students (13.33%) provided acceptable translation (dakhalt ʔelã ʔal šaff) دخلت إلى غرفة الصف or (fi ʔal šaff) في الصف they added ʔelã إلى to the word (dakhaltu) دخلت or (fi) في which is not needed because into indicates the movement of something or someone is going to another location. While in only describes where they are without movement. (9) students provided the wrong translation (ʔanã dakhel ʔal šaf) دنا داخل الصف which is equivalent to I am in the classroom or inside the
classroom. This is grammatically wrong because it indicates that someone is already in the classroom without any movement. Syntactically they used (ʔanā) انا at the beginning of the sentence. The students inserted the structures and the rules of English into Arabic in their translations. It is important for the translators to understand that, across this wide spectrum of syntactical structures and discoursal contexts, each preposition may be used very differently which allows the translators to make valid assumptions regarding the use of a given preposition in a complete range of grammatical and lexical structures.

4.9. Statement (9)

I jumped into the swimming pool.

Suggested model answer: قفزت داخل بركة السباحة Qafaztu dākhela berkati ʔalssebā hati.

Only (5) students provided the correct translation. Meanwhile (51) students provided acceptable translation (qafaztu fĩ) قفزت في which is grammatically correct because the verb is in the present tense while it should be in the past. The translation of the preposition (ʔelã) الى is the equivalent of to. It is essential that translators acquire an in-depth knowledge of the linguistic structures and forms both of the target language and their mother tongue as well as the discourse skills required for the production of coherent and cohesive communication.

4.10. Statement (10)

There was a mirror over the sink

Suggested model answer: هناك مرآة فوق الحوض/المغسلة Hunāka merʔatun fawqa ʔal ḥawḍ/ʔalmeghsalate.

In this statement (31) Students translated the statement correctly. (15) Students provided acceptable translation; they used (ʔalã) على which is the equivalent of on in English instead of (fawqa) فوق which is acceptable in Arabic. (12) Students translated the statement incorrectly by translating over as (tah̩ ta) تحت which is the equivalent of under in English. This indicates students’ lack of familiarity with the prepositions therefore translators should always be conscious and ensure a complete understanding of the source text and the multiplicity of functions that prepositions fulfill. According to Halliday & Hasan (1976:2), “A text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning”.

4.11. Statement (11)

He drove the car along the road carefully.

Suggested model answer: قاد المركبة طوال الطريق بحذر Qãda ʔalmarkabata t̩ewãla ʔal tařiq be ḥaðar.

As shown in Table (1) (26) students (43.33%) provided correct translation. Meanwhile, (29) students (48.33%) provided acceptable translations. Only (5) students provided the wrong translation (howa yasũq sayyãra t̩awĩlah wa ḥaðer ʔalat̩ ʔaɾiq) they have semantic problems here because they did not know the semantics implication of the preposition. This meaning here is closely linked to other words’ meanings since prepositions encode only a small segment of all semantic relationships.

4.12. Statement (12)

We could hear the rain falling on the roof.

Suggested model answer: يمكننا سماع المطر يتساقط على السطح Yumkenunã samã ʔalmataru yatasãqat̩ u ʔalal ʔal sath.
In this statement, 39 students (65%) provided correct translation. While (14) students (23.33%), provided acceptable translation (yanzelu ظالا ظالسmental). The student used the word (yanzelu which is equivalent to come down instead of (yatasqat) which is the right equivalent to falling. Only (5) students (8.33) provided the wrong translation by using falling as (yatahθam) which is equivalent to crashing in English. Students tried to perform a relevant adequate translation. It is worth mentioning here that it is important to understand the content, the communicative function, and the stylistic effect of the specific features of the text. A syntactic error was committed (yanzel ظال هار الوهج النصامأطه) which is equivalent to instead of (fĩ) ينزل المطر坠於 نسمه. ينزل الطروثة which is the right equivalent to falling the word order is not correct. The order of prepositions within a sentence poses difficulties in the translation process for a translator when translating a chunk of text while using the same order of words in both languages which can only be solved by developing an adequate knowledge of the language.

4.13. Statement (13)

Let's have dinner in my place.

Suggested model answer: دعنا نتناول طعام العشاء في منزلي. Daγna natanãwatu ʔaγama ظال ʔashã’fĩ manzili.

(34) students (56.67%) rendered the statement correctly. On the other hand, (13) students (21.67%) provided acceptable translation by using the word (makãnĩ) مكنى which is literal translation for the word my place which is acceptable. (4) student (6.67%) rendered the statement incorrectly by translating the preposition in as ( ظالا) ظل which is equivalent to instead of (fĩ) ف. Others translated dinner as (ألفهداد) which is equivalent to lunch in English. Some might argue that it is not correct to use in as a preposition in this situation and the correct preposition is at. (Swan1995,444) stated that the English preposition "at" has been documented as having eighteen main uses or functions. It can be said that using at is correct and on is correct because on indicates a movement to the place, not the location. This case was described by (Bassnett 2014,59) when she says: "Students of English quickly encounter what I call 'the killer preposition,' that is, the English usage of prepositions to completely alter the meaning of a verb".

4.14. Statement (14)

I moved to Germany in 1998.


In this example (42) students (70%) provided correct translation. Meanwhile (16) students (26.67%) provided acceptable translation (ʔintaqalt ظالا) ظلت انتقلت إلى which is equivalent to instead of (intaqalt iel ظشى) ظلت انتقلت إلى. To which is equivalent to ( ظالا) ظلمة in Arabic indicates the movement of a person or an object towards a point. Therefore, it has both meanings together; the meaning of to and in. Only (2) students provided incorrect translations by using the slang Arabic (روحت ظالا) رحث على which is equivalent to went on in English.

4.15. Statement (15)

He's gone to the seashore.

Suggested model answer: ظهد إلى الشاطيء. ʔahaba ظال ظالثيا.

(29) Students (48.33%) rendered the statement correctly. While (12) students (20%) provided acceptable translation (ʔahaba ظال ظالبهر) ظذب إلى البحر which is equivalent to He has gone to the sea. (19) Students (31.67%) rendered the statement incorrectly; they used literal translation (hoowa ظهد ظال ظامم) هو ظهد إلى الدعم. They used (داγم) دعم which is equivalent to support in English. Other students translated the preposition to ( ظالا) ظلمة which is equivalent to on in English. This leads to misinterpretation of the intended message. To avoid such cases of misinterpretation, it is important to get a complete understanding, so as to convey the intended meanings.
4.16. Statement (16) and Statement (17)

We walked across the park.

Suggested model answer: تمشينا في المنتزه (من منحة الى مخرجه).

4.17. Statement (17)

We walked through the park.

Suggested model answer: تمشينا في المنتزه (من منتصفه وخرجنا من مخرج آخر).

As shown in statement (16), there are (24) students (40%) who rendered the statement correctly. Meanwhile, (12) students (20%) had an acceptable translation. The statement was rendered incorrectly by (24) students (40%). On the other hand in statement (17) there are (14) students (23.33%) rendered the statement correctly. Meanwhile (24) students provided acceptable translations. The statement was rendered incorrectly by (19) students (31.67%).

According to (R. Quirk, S. Greenbaum, G. Leech and J. Svartvik (1973). Across is movement from one side of an area, surface, or line to the other side. Through is movement from one side of an enclosed space to the other side. The translations of the two statements carried by the students were almost the same. They translated across literally into (bra) عبر and through into (khalâl) خلال. Both are acceptable even though there is a difference between the two prepositions in English yet when translating them into Arabic the same equivalent can be used. The students who translated the two sentences incorrectly translated the prepositions across and through into (bettija) باتجاه or (nahwa) نحو. The equivalent of the preposition towards in English is (lenehâyat) لنهاية which is equivalent to the end of in English. Providing unacceptable Arabic equivalents of some English prepositions resulted in affecting or even changing the meaning. It is worth mentioning here that prepositions can acquire different senses in different contexts. According to (Roikiené 2005, 9) “the precise interpretation assigned to the preposition is constrained and delimited by the sentential context, including the Trajector, the Landmark, and the verb which occurs in the utterance”. Hence, the role of the preposition in rendering the meaning at the level of specificity is partially acceptable.

4.18. Statement (18) and Statement (19)

They drove across the city.

Suggested model answer: قادوا السيارة/المركبة عبر المدينة Qadû ālssayyaratâ/ almarkabata almadinatî.

4.19. Statement (19)

They drove through the city.

Suggested model answer: قادوا السيارة/المركبة عبر المدينة Qadû ālssayyaratâ/ almarkabata almadinatî.

In statement (18) only (22) students (36.67%) provided correct translation. While (11) students (18.33%) provided acceptable translations. On the other hand, (26) students (43.33%) translated the statement incorrectly. In statement (19) Only (8) students (13.33%) provided the correct translation. While (15) students (25%) provided acceptable translations. On the other hand, (33) students (55%) translated the statement incorrectly. Similar to statement (16) and (17) we have the prepositions across and through which confused the students and it is clear that they did not know the difference between them. In statement (18) and (19) most of the students rendered the statements into (qadû ʕabra) قادوا عبر/خلال المدينة which is somehow acceptable. The word is not written in the source language but the students who provided the
correct answer paraphrased the sentence and found out that the object of the verb (alsayyārah) which is equivalent to car or vehicle in English is missing and it should be added to the translation of the target language otherwise it would be syntactically insufficient. The students who translated the two sentences incorrectly translated the prepositions across and through into (bettijāh) or (nahwā) which are the equivalents of the preposition towards in English. And one student translated the word we drove into (nataqalqal) which is equivalent to we move in English. This shows a semantic problem that students suffer from which distort the meaning. As a result, translators frequently have to add, remove, and rearrange source words to effectively communicate in the target language.

4.20. Statement (20)

The dog is running towards me.

Suggested model answer: يركض الكلب متجها نحوى. I think we've past Oxford in English. Another student translated it literally we must have gone wrong. This translation distorted the meaning of the sentence as (yajeb ʕalla ʔa nakabha ʔal kha ʔa) which is equivalent to we must have to go the wrong which is semantically and syntactically wrong. This would be incomprehensible and makes no sense to Arabic readers. According to (Herskovits 1986, 145) “there is an ideal meaning of preposition, which is defined as a relation between ideal geometric objects such as point, line, surface, etc. All uses of the preposition are derived by means of operations involving adaptations and shifts in this meaning”.

4.21. Statement (21)

I think we’re heading towards Oxford now; we must have gone wrong.

Suggested model answer: اعتدنا الان نتجه نحو اكسفورد. لابد اننا أخطأنا/ كنا مخطئين. Only (30) students (50%) rendered the statement correctly. While (24) students (40%) provided acceptable translation by using the word (bettijāh) which is acceptable and used another correct equivalent for the word think which is (ʔa ʔozn). Meanwhile, (17) students (28.33%) provided acceptable translation using the word (nattaje ʕal k̩a in. The statement was rendered incorrectly by (8) students (13.33%) when they used the wrong equivalent for the preposition towards (lāheqan bī) or (lilli hāq bī) which indicates that the dog is behind them and not in front of them which is wrong. Other students have grammatical errors by using the plural dogs instead of dog which is a subject-verb agreement error. Sometimes translators use prepositions incorrectly due to first-language interference with the correct form in the target language.

4.22. Statement (22)

Let’s get back onto the path.

Suggested model answer: دعونا نعود الى الطريق. دعونا نعود الى الطريق. In English, it is better to say get onto the path instead of getting back on the path, but it is still acceptable. On the other hand, (8) students (13.33%) translated the statement incorrectly by using (hayā narje ʕu wanaḥṣulu ʕalā ḥammām) which is equivalent to Let’s come back and have a bath. It is clear
here that there is a semantic error related to student’s misunderstanding of the full meaning of the statement by using the literal translation of the preposition. (20) Students (33.33%) skipped translating the statement because they faced trouble in analyzing the semantics meanings due to the lack of specific meanings of the preposition, and identifying what is meant by semantic uses of prepositions. The error here does not impede adequate communication of the main message.

4.23. Statement (23)

He kicked the ball toward the goal.

Suggested model answer:  ركل الكرة الى المرمى (rakala/qathafa) ʔalkurata bettijähi ʔal marmã / nahwa ʔal hadaf.

(37) students (61.67%) provided correct translation. Meanwhile (6) students (10%) provided acceptable translation by translating towards the goal into (rakala ʔalkora ʔelã ʔalmarmã). The student used (ʔelã ) the equivalent of to instead of towards. On the other hand, (8) students (13.33%) translated the statement incorrectly (lakad ḏarába ʔal kora leʔîhráz ʔalhadaf). This which is equivalent to He hit the ball to score a goal. In this case, translators should be aware of not only the explicitly stated meanings of prepositions but the implicitly communicated ones. They also should be aware that a preposition can share some of its meanings with other prepositions. According to (Downing & Locke 1992,178) “prepositional sets, unlike other members of grammatical paradigm, are not mutually exclusive. That is, one member of the paradigm can be used in the place of the other in a given syntactic frame”.

4.24. Statement (24)

They couldn’t get the new sofa through the door.

Suggested model answer: لم يستطيعوا ادخال الاريكة من الباب (kodnã ʔal šawãre’a). Only (22) students (36.67%) provided correct translation. (15) Students (25%) provided acceptable translation using slang Arabic equivalent (ʔalkanabãyeh) for the word sofa. They literally translated the preposition through (men ʔabra) عبر . On the other hand, (12) students (20%) translated the statement incorrectly some had grammatical mistakes such as using singular instead of plural (la yastatee’)لا يستطيع إدخال الاريكة من الباب. Other students had semantic errors (lam yatamakkanũ mena ḏ̩ ġalũ) لم يتمكنوا من الوصول. They only translated the preposition through (men ʔabra) عبر which is equivalent to they couldn't have new sofa which is not the intended meaning but they translated the preposition through correctly. When students are not sure which prepositions to use in a certain phrase, they often resort to a possible equivalence in their mother tongue, giving a literal translation of the Arabic preposition into English. Careful analysis of the source text meaning will enable the translator to decide on the most appropriate rendering of the contextualized preposition in the target text.

4.25. Statement (25)

We drove through some spectacular countryside.

Suggested model answer: تجولنا في السيارة عبر بعض المناطق الريفية الجميلة (almarmã /جرملã ʔarikaten jadĩdaten). Only (8) students (13.33%) provided correct translation. On the other hand (25) students (42%) provided acceptable translation (kodnã ʔabra baʔi ɗ almanţeq ʔalrĩfeyyah ʕal mo‘ăhel). Here the student did not mention the word (ʔalsayyara) the preposition which is equivalent to car in English. Car is not mentioned because through some spectacular countryside is a prepositional phrase. Some spectacular countryside is the object of the preposition through, not the direct object of the verb drove because the direct object is car which is deleted. (12) Students (20%) translated the statement incorrectly into (kodnã dâkhei ʕal shawăre’a ʕal fer‘eyyah ʕalmomayyaza ʔilmadĩnah). This which is totally incorrect and equivalent to We've been in
the city's distinctive sub-streets. In this case, the student did not understand the whole meaning of the words and rendered them wrongly, the preposition through was translated into (dâkhel) which is equivalent to into in English, and provided words that were not mentioned in the source text and not even related to (ؤلفكیاکدی) which is equivalent to sub-streets and the word (ٌللموماکداکدی) which is equivalent to distinctive instead of spectacular and (ٌلمدیناکدی) which is equivalent to city instead of countryside. The native language's negative influence on students and on their ability to acquire prepositions that function differently in their Arabic language than its function in the translation of English is very obvious in the translation of this statement. It is worth mentioning here that the preference for one preposition over another may not always be due merely to meaning: register and tone may well come into play, too.

4.26. Statement (26)

The singer stepped onto the platform.

Suggested model answer: صعد المغني إلى المنصة

In this example (17) students (28.33%) provided correct translation. Meanwhile (22) students (36.67%) rendered the statement acceptably into (ٌللمگاممنکدی) which is (ٌللمامکداکدی) also (ٌلمیماکداکدی) which is (ٌلمکمکداکدی). On the other hand (12) students (20%) translated the statement incorrectly using the equivalent of the word platform which is (ٌلمکمگانکدی ٌلمبکماکدی ٌلمکاکدی) which is equivalent to city instead of countryside. This is the equivalent to The singer walked on his specific program which is totally far away from the intended meaning. Their translations comprised only the explicitly stated meaning therefore the translations are not communicative in the sense that they never made a reference to the intended meaning.

4.27. Statement (27)

Professor of Geography asks his students to look at the moon: You won’t be able to see it unless you look through the binoculars.

Suggested model answer: لن تكونوا قادرين على رؤيته الا إذا نظرتم من خلال المناظير

This statement was rendered correctly by (28) students (46.67%). Meanwhile (11) students (18.33%) provided acceptable translation (ٌلماکمنکدی) which is (ٌلمکمکداکدی) which is equivalent to You’ll only be able to see it through the binoculars. On the other hand, (5) students (8.33%) translated the statement incorrectly (ٌلمدکمکداکدی ٌلمکمکداکدی ٌلمکمکداکدی) which is equivalent to Not seeing things but with a microscope. The students could not find an Arabic translation due to their lack of knowledge in Arabic prepositions and their multiple uses and usages.

4.28. Statement (28)

I’ll jump over the wall and open the gate.

Suggested model answer: ساقفز فوق الحائط وأفتح البوابة

(32) students (53.33%) provided correct translation. On the other hand, (12) students (20%) translated the preposition over into (ٌلمکمکداکدی) which is (ٌلمکمکداکدی) which is equivalent to from in English. Other student used (ٌلمکمکداکدی) which is equivalent to through in English. (8) Students (13.33%) did not translate it at all.
4.29. Statement (29)

The aircraft flew low over the lake.

Suggested model answer: حلقت الطائرة منخفضة فوق البحيرة ḥallaqat ẓalṭaratu munkhafeḍatana fawqa ẓal buḥairati.

(31) students (51.67%) provided correct translation. Meanwhile, (9) students (15%) provided acceptable translation. All translations using the equivalents (beshaklen monkhafed) or (benkhifad) for the word low are acceptable. (5) students (8.33%) translated the statement incorrectly into ẓattar ḥallaqat beshaklen qarībīn mena ẓalbuḥairah. The student translated the preposition over incorrectly; they translated it into (mena) which is equivalent to from in English. They convey the structure of English into Arabic by writing the subject followed by the verb while it is more convenient to write the verb followed by the subject in Arabic. They usually relate them to their own mother tongue’s prepositional system.

4.30. Statement (30)

We were walking along the river when it started to rain

Suggested model answer: كان نسير (على طول/بمحاذاة) النهر عندما بدأت السماء تُغرَب Kunnah nasiru ẓala ṭuli/bimuḥdāṭī ẓalnahrī ẓendama badaa ẓalaassama-u tumṭeru.

(11) students (18.33%) provided correct translation. While (27) students (45%) provided acceptable translation (konnah namshi ṣalā ḍeffati ẓalnahrī ẓendamā badaa ẓalmataro bennozūl) which is equivalent to We were walking on the riverbank when the rain started to come down. On the other hand, (11) students (18.33%) translated the statement incorrectly into (konnah nasīr ṣalā ẓalnahrī ẓawīlī ẓendmā badaa ẓalmatar) which is equivalent to We were walking on the long river when the rain started. It can be seen that the students mistranslated the preposition along and rendered it into long (tawīl) which is incorrect. That indicates a lack of familiarity and, a wrong understanding of the preposition of movement along in English and the appropriate equivalent in Arabic. This is a lexical problem due to the misunderstanding of word meaning. Lexical problems which may be encountered when translating can be classified as literal meaning, synonyms, technical terms, proper names polysemy, collocation, and idioms.

CONCLUSIONS

Translating prepositions is a challenging task due to the fact that they are highly idiomatic and of polysemous nature. Polysemy is “a semantic characteristic of words that have multiple meanings” (Koffi 2010, 299). Prepositions have several definitions and a variety of meanings depending on context. Usually, they are monomorphemic words that belong to the closed class of lexical items that cannot be derived from other words. They derive their meaning from their relation to other words in the context. This challenge can be attributed to several factors. First, students usually relate them to the Arabic prepositional system. Second lack of prepositional knowledge which leads to making errors. Students should not depend on propositional knowledge from their first language. If They make “assumptions of semantic equivalence between the first and second languages”, it often results in prepositional errors (Lam 2009,3). Third, prepositions perform a number of complex syntactic and semantic roles; they have multiple syntactic functions that can be demanding for students. Another challenge is the lack of a direct corresponding preposition in the students’ first language which makes prepositions difficult to comprehend. Fifth, Prepositions are likely to have a relatively small number of related literal meanings. According to (Lakoff 1978,123) “Some of the literal meanings of a preposition especially its prototypical meaning, are extended by metaphor to create another relatively small set of related meanings”. lastly, many students have difficulties understanding and using prepositions. Moreover, (Ozisik 2014,67) claimed that “the reason why students find prepositions very hard to learn is that there are no specific rules in their usage. Since each language has its own rules, the situation varies greatly from language to language”.

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