

Investigating French Interference in Algerian Students' English-Arabic / Arabic- English Translations of Collocations

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This study investigates the interference of French as Second Language (SL) on English as Foreign Language (FL) for 89 Algerian translation students in their English Arabic/ Arabic English translation of test sentences involving adjective+ noun collocations. Based on existing definitions from (Sinclair, 1991; Evert, 2008; McEnery and Hardie, 2012) and given the adopted corpus-based and lexico-grammatical approach, we define collocations as follows: the tendency of lexical items of a particular class to significantly and exclusively re-appear in the company of another word within specific grammatical patterns at a specified proximity in a given corpus data.

The study, not only analyses translation between two languages (Arabic and English) but also focuses on interference from a third language (French) which is seldom covered in existing literature. It investigates how these students: (i) render into Arabic, English collocations involving adjectives which are themselves false friends with corresponding French adjectives; (ii) translate Arabic collocations, the nodes of which are synonymous nouns in Arabic to English nouns that are false friends with French. These English nouns, as is the case with the adjectives, are obtained from a compiled list of false friends between English and French (Thody and Evans, 1985). The list categorises the false friends into weak and strong based on whether they share some meaning/s or not respectively between the two languages. This research uses strong false friends as they will clearly reveal instances of French interference.

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach in which both a self-reporting questionnaire, adapted from other studies (Magno, 2009; Ahmed, 2012); and a devised 30-item translation of two parts, English and Arabic collocations, have been used. To extract both frequent and exclusive general English and Arabic collocations, we used English Web 2015 (enTenTen15) and Arabic Web Corpus (arTenTen) which are both available through the Sketch Engine tool (Kilgarriff et al, 2014).

In order to extract the English collocations, twenty strong adjectival false friends were explored. For each of the nodes in the list, the best noun collocate was found in the top ten collocates in both the Log-Likelihood and the Log Dice score lists in Sketch Engine. Function words, technical terms, and punctuation were considered in the analysis. The same process was replicated to form the Arabic collocations but with ten focal nodes representing synonymous nouns, in Arabic, to English nouns which are strong false friends with French.

The preliminary analysis reveals that French interference is more likely to occur when translating from English to Arabic rather than vice versa. This can be demonstrated through the better performance in translating Arabic collocations into English than translating from English to Arabic. The reasons for Algerian students' collocational errors were lexical to a greater extent and grammatical to a lesser extent, which showcases how collocation depicts the inseparability of lexis and grammar even if they do not contribute equally to lexical cores (Gabrielatos, 2019).

Keywords: *collocations, corpus-based, lexico-grammar, false friends*

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