

# **Linguistic Incompetence In English-Arabic Translation: A Case Study Of "Prepositions" Among Arabic Students In The Federal College Of Education (Technical) Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Previous studies have shown that the process of translation from English to Arabic involves many obstacles, especially those related to linguistic elements. This makes it even more complicated for tertiary students and has led the researchers to examine some common errors in translating prepositions from English into Arabic and to uncover the causes of linguistic difficulties in translating prepositions from English into Arabic. As a case study, the researchers used a qualitative approach by employing an assessment tool and conducting interviews with the study sample group. After analysing the data collected, the researchers found some errors that Arabic students encounter, including addition, subtraction and omission according to the theory of translation error detection (Sager, 1983). The survey conducted later revealed four reasons for these difficulties, including differences between prepositions in English and Arabic, prepositions are more complicated in English, they duplicate Arabic and there are no set rules for the use of prepositions in English. Some suggestions were also made to solve these difficulties. Finally, this study is of great importance to Arabic students, scholars and English-Arabic translators as it provides them with an awareness of common errors in English-Arabic translation.

**Keywords:** Incompetence, Linguistic, Text translation, Case study, Prepositions.

## INTRODUCTION

Many studies have been carried out in the field of linguistic translation - linguistic elements - and the present study focuses on one of them. For instance, Adebisi and Mukadam (2020) in their article "Teaching Arabic-English Translation in the University of Ilorin: Any Challenge?" noted that students in Nigerian schools encounter linguistic problems in translation. Al-karazoum (2016) thought to identify the linguistic errors Jordanian EFL students make when translating news headlines from Arabic to English and vice versa. Similarly, Khalifa (2015) conducted a study to identify the translation problems of English and Arabic structures faced by Saudi English students. Alfadly and Aldiebani (2013) investigated the problems of translation from English to Arabic and vice versa among English students in the Faculty of Arts at Hadramout University in Yemen.

Al-Sohbani and Muthanna (2013) investigated the major challenges in translating from Arabic to English for fourth-year students in the English Department of the Faculty of Arts at Ibb University in Yemen. Mehenni (2010) studied the ability of Algerian English students to translate long Arabic sentences into English. Al-Nakhala (2006) investigated the difficulties of Palestinian English students at al-Quds Open University in the Gaza Strip in translating tenses from English into Arabic. Jabak (2007) conducted a study with 200 Arab students to determine the problems they face in translating from Arabic into English. The results showed that 55% of the problems were linguistic. Similar to these earlier studies, Moharram (2004) conducted

a study on students' errors in translating from Arabic into English and found a number of errors that can be considered as attributes of this problem. These include vocabulary, prepositions and gender, meaningless use of words, incorrect use of grammatical forms, use of long and incorrect sentences, and incorrect use of spelling.

Despite the previous studies on English-Arabic translation, there is still a lack of research on translation difficulties in English and Arabic. Not enough attention has been paid to research, especially to the aspect of textual analysis. Most previous studies focused on difficulties within the culture or language mastery at the sentence level. Thus, there is a lack of studies in the field of translation that could fill the gap that exists in the area of studying students' translation skills and the errors committed.

## ISSUES IN PREPOSITIONAL TRANSLATION

The translation of prepositions is one of the major difficulties that cause controversy among students of Arabic, especially when translating from English into Arabic. Hattab (2012) defines prepositions as short words that combine certain components to convey certain meanings. She points out that prepositions are essential to convey meaning adequately and play an important role in mutual understanding between speakers. She also noted that prepositions pose difficulties in translation even for advanced learners because prepositions are used differently in the native language and in the learned language. On the other hand, Hansard (2012) follows her in classifying directional prepositions and locative prepositions. He states that prepositions of

locations appear with verbs describing status or condition while prepositions of directions appear with verbs of motions (Hansard, 2012:1).

There are many studies on English and Arabic prepositions in terms of translations or pure prepositional studies. For example, Asma (2016) conducted a study on the use of prepositions by primary school students in her Master of Arts at Geziera University Sudan. She found some reasons for the problem in translating prepositions caused by literal translation. In the same vein, Abutulb (2016) also conducted a similar study titled: Problems in the use of English prepositions of time by EFL students. The aim was to investigate the problems that students of Wed El-Hindi Secondary School face in using prepositions of time. We can also see how Al-Yaari and Almaflehi (2013) conducted a study to determine the difficulties in translating the prepositions *at*, *in* and *on* into Arabic among 50 Saudi male and female students. The result showed that Saudi EFL students have difficulties in translating the prepositions into Arabic. In his studies, Al-Bayati (2013) identified the errors made by Iraqi students EFL in using prepositions and the reasons for these errors. Learners at the Department of English Language at the University of Kufa were asked to answer subjective and objective questions in the form of essays. The texts of 32 students were selected for error analysis. The result showed that the students had difficulties in using English prepositions. They committed inter-lingual errors due to the influence of their first language. The errors were classified into three categories, omission, substitution and addition.

## COMMON ERRORS IN PREPOSITIONAL TRANSLATION

Almurshidi (2014) investigated the errors that students from the United Arab Emirates make when using English prepositions. A sample of 30 Arab students participated in the study. The students answered a remainder of English prepositions that contained 30 multiple-choice questions. The results showed that the students made syntactic errors such as addition, deletion, substitution and redundancy. These Arab learners were influenced by their mother tongue, which had a negative effect on their use of English prepositions. Alayesh (2012) investigated the effects of understanding Arabic prepositions on the use of English prepositions. After collecting data, analysis of the data revealed that understanding the different meanings of Arabic prepositions can prevent the misuse of many English prepositions. Similarly, Mahmoodzadeh (2012) conducted a study on Iranian EFL learners' errors due to the influence of L1/SL on L2/TL among 53 Iranian learners studying English at intermediate level at a foreign language institute in Mashhad. The aim was to investigate the status of the different types of prepositional errors learners made due to the transitional constraints between Persian and English. The result showed that most of the errors were related to the incorrect use and redundancy of prepositions, while the errors were related to the omission of prepositions in the L2.

Kharna et al. (1997) are of the opinion that most of the errors in translation from Arabic to English occur in English grammar, and especially in prepositions, which cause the most problems in grammar. Kharna (1997)

also describe prepositional errors as a constant problem for Arab learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). They noted that it is the most troublesome part among grammatical words, which seems to occupy the first or second position among all aspects of grammar. In his study, Tahaine (2010) agrees with Kharma (1997) when he wrote down some errors after focusing on the use of prepositions in English and Arabic and noted the types of errors that Arab students make when translating prepositions from English to Arabic and vice versa. After reviewing the grammatical errors that Arab learners (EFL) make, Hashim (1996) categorised the grammatical errors into seven categories and mentioned "prepositions" among these errors. According to Moharram (2004), prepositions are another linguistic category that poses a huge challenge not only to Arabs learning English as a second language, but to almost all learners of English.

Prepositions in English and Arabic are in many cases very different in meaning and usage. To prove this, Al-marrani (2009) conducted a study aimed at comparing and contrasting the subsystems of prepositions in Arabic and English in terms of their uses, functions and meanings in order to identify the main similarities and differences between the two languages. The results of his study showed that there are both similarities and differences. The similarities make learning a foreign language easier, which is called "positive transfer", while the differences make learning more difficult and cause a lot of errors, which is called "negative transfer" or "interference".

Since we all know that English and Arabic belong to two different groups, this can be a solid proof that they neither have the same prepositions nor use prepositions in the same way. When Arabic students at the Federal College of Education (Technical) Gusau have to translate from English into Arabic, they may be tempted to translate English prepositions into Arabic on the basis of their lexical meaning in the source language, since both languages are like a second and third language to them, which may be true in some cases but not in all. In his book (Najeeb, 2005), he points out that a word can have more than one meaning in another language depending on the context. For example, a prepositional word "at" can be translated into Arabic as: " في or عند or لدى ", as can be seen in the following illustrations:

- Meet me at the station - قابلني عند المحطة - station
- He lives at 22, Akkad street - يسكن في 22 شارع العقاد - Akkad street
- He screamed at the top of his voice - صرخ بأعلى صوته - of his voice
- You'll find him at the grocer's - ستجده لدى محل البقالة - the grocer's

Furthermore, Jabak (2018) has given other examples on this issue. For example, the Arabic word "عن" can be translated into English as "about, for, from or of", as the following examples clearly show:

He asked about you  
سأل عَنكَ you

I am responsible for my family  
أنا مسؤول عن عائلتي

He was absent كان غائبا عن الاجتماع  
from the meeting

My brother is أخي مستقل ماديا عن أبي  
independent of my father financially

Consequently, the researchers found it is an indispensable requisite to investigate the difficulties encountered by students mainly in English-Arabic texts translation. In this regard, the current study may shed light on students' ability in texts translation from English to Arabic languages by answering the following questions:

1. What are the types of errors encountered by Arabic Students in Federal College of Education (Technical) Gusau while translating Preposition Particles in English-Arabic Texts?
2. Why the Students make such errors?

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The researchers selected four final year National Certificate in Education (NCE) students from the Federal College of Education (Technical) Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria (FCE T) to form a sample for this study. The students were from the Arabic Department of the college, majoring in English-Arabic. They were all female students and aged between 20 and 25 years. They were informed that the test would not be graded but would only be used for the present study and that their names would remain anonymous. They were then asked to take the test as seriously as possible and also to answer the interview questions honestly.

As this is qualitative research, the researchers used two research instruments to collect data, which are very common in this kind of research. The first instrument was a short translation test designed and administered to four Arabic students in their final year of study in English-Arabic at the Federal College of Education (Technical) Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria in the second semester of 2021. The translation test is one of the best instruments that can be used in a qualitative study. According to Bachman (1990), language tests can be considered as helpful sources of feedback on both language learning and language teaching processes. In addition, a test can also help in solving a number of theoretical and practical problems related to language acquisition and assessment under pedagogical conditions (Chappele, 1998).

As cited in Jabak (2019), translation tests have been extensively used in translation research in the Arab world by some Arab translation scholars such as Kharma et al. (1985), Farghal and Obeidat (1995), Hassan (1997), Mahmoud (2002), Moharram (2004), Rabeh (2009-2010), Bekkai (2010) and others. The test items were checked and reviewed by some translation scholars to correct any inaccuracies and oversights before they were given to the students. The test involves a full page of English text which students have to translate into Arabic. The use of bilingual dictionaries was also allowed. This instrument would help the researchers answer the first question of the study.

The second data collection instrument was an interview given to the participants individually after they had corrected the

test. The interview contained two open-ended questions: Why do the students think they are unable to correctly translate prepositional particles from English to Arabic? And how do they think they can overcome such a problem? As cited in Jabak (2019), the interview method is one of the most commonly used methods in qualitative research. (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Kumar, 1996; Punch, 1998). This tool would help the researchers to answer the second question of the research.

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### TYPES OF ERRORS (FIRST OBJECTIVE)

Students made different types of errors: tense, word order, spelling, etc. However, the focus was on the errors related to the area of study, preposition. When examining the recurring errors made by the students, they can be classified into omission, addition and substitution. This classification is based on Sager's (1983) classification of translation errors, with some modifications to suit the objectives of the study. This means that some errors were caused by the addition of some prepositions, some were caused by the substitution of some prepositions with others that did not belong there, while others were caused by the omission of some prepositions in the translation. This classification was used as categories for the subthemes of the main theme. Most errors occurred in three subthemes of the main theme, namely the prepositions of time, place and movement.

When analysing the data collected with the study's assessment tool (translation test), the researchers found some errors made by the students in the sample whose translation was included in this study. The researchers examined the errors they made when translating texts related to "prepositions" from English into Arabic. The following table shows the total number of errors found during the evaluation.

Table 1 below shows how many errors the students made in the assessment instrument. After the researchers corrected the test, they found errors in the instrument, which will now be discussed. The first column on the left contains the linguistic factor "Syntactic" and the theme of the study, namely "Preposition". The second column on the left contains the subtheme, which consists of different types of prepositions. So, preposition of place, preposition of time and preposition of movement. The second column on the right side of the table contains three sub-columns with the classification categories of the subthemes, including addition, substitution and omission. These three columns in the last column also contain the total frequency of errors for each category. Finally, the last column contains the total frequency of errors in each subtheme and the total frequency of all subthemes and their categories.

As can be seen in Table 1 below, students made some errors in the assessment instrument. First, for subtheme number one (Preposition of Place), the researchers found (10) errors in category 1 (Addition), (16) errors in category 2 (Substitution) and (10) errors in category 3 (Omission), giving a total of (36) errors in this subtheme, as can

be seen in the table. Secondly, in subtheme number two (Preposition of Time), the researchers found (23) errors in category 1 (Addition), another (23) errors in category 2 (Substitution) and (06) errors in category 3 (Omission), making a total of (49) errors in this subtheme. In the last subtheme (Preposition of Movement) and in relation to category-1 (Addition), the researchers found (21) errors in the assessment instruments given to the participants. In

category-2 (Substitution), the researchers found (23) errors and in category-3 (Omission), they found (15) errors, giving a total frequency of (59). The total frequency of the two subthemes and their categories is (144) each, as shown in the table.

With these errors, the first question of the study has been answered and the first objective of the study has also been achieved.

Table 1: Presentation of Errors Found in Evaluation Instrument

العامل والموضوع Factor & Theme	فرع الموضوع Subtheme	التكرار في الفئات Frequency in Categories			المجموع Total
		Addition الزيادة	Substitution الاستبدال	Omission الحذف	
Syntactic Factor العامل النحوي Prepositions حروف الجر	Preposition of Place حروف الجر المكانية	10	16	10	36
	Preposition of Time حروف الجر الزمانية	23	23	06	49
	Preposition of Movement حروف الجر الانتقالية	21	23	15	59
مجموع الأخطاء في الموضوع Total Errors in the Topic		54	59	31	144

## DISCUSSION

In the analysis of the assessment instrument, which examined the students' translation in relation to the text they were asked to test, the researchers found some errors in the translation of prepositions from English into Arabic, as mentioned in the last table. Some of the errors were omissions of the corresponding preposition in the target language, some were substitutions and some were additions, as the following examples in the table show. However, not all examples can be included in the table. The researchers have given

some examples to illustrate how they occur in the texts. As can be seen in the next table, the first column from the left contains the statements quoted from the source language text. The middle column contains the errors in the students' translation, while the last column on the right shows the correct translation.

## ADDITION

The results from Table-1 show that students made about (144) errors in the assessment tool (translation test). The total errors were divided into three categories as mentioned

above. That is, addition, omission and substitution. The result also shows that (54) addition errors, (59) substitution errors and (31) omission errors were found. Tables 2,

3 and 4 below show some of the most common errors in these categories, followed by a discussion of the errors.

Table 2: Errors of Addition

العبارات Statements	الأخطاء Errors	الترجمة الصحيحة Correct Translation
But quite soon my story ceased to be narcissistic	لكن <u>من</u> غير التطويل وخبري غير <u>إلى</u> التبين	لكن سرعان ما توقف قصتي <u>عن</u> كونها نرجسية
Which made me unpopular throughout my schooldays	هو <u>الدليل على</u> عدم التعرف <u>في</u> حياتي المدرسية	الذي جعلني أكون غير مشهور طوال أيام دراستي
But I did so with the consciousness	فعلت ذلك <u>مع</u> خروج <u>من</u> حقيقة	لكنني فعلت ذلك مع الوعي
For this and other reasons I was lonely.	<u>ومع</u> هذا <u>الدليل</u> كنت <u>على</u> غير الحال	فلهذا وأسباب أخرى كنت وحيدا.
And I soon developed disagreeable manners	<u>ومن</u> غير طول كبرت <u>في</u> الكرام	وسرعان ما تطورث أخلاقا بغيضة
However, throughout this time	<u>مع</u> هذا <u>في</u> كل هذه السنوات	ومع ذلك، طوال هذا الوقت

Consider the first statement quoted from the text, "But quite soon my story ceased to be narcissistic" translated into Arabic as, " لكن من غير التطويل وخبري غير إلى التبين " we can see how the translator has added some prepositions. Particles in Arabic like (من) and (إلى) do not belong here, considering the context of the statement. He or she might rather translate it as " لكن سرعان ما توقفت " قصتي عن كونها نرجسية

The second statement: "which made me unpopular throughout my schooldays" is attempted by the translator as: " هو الدليل على " عدم التعرف في حياتي المدرسية ". The translator added the underlined particles (على) and (في). He or she could rather translate it as: " الذي جعلني أكون غير مشهور طوال أيام دراستي ".

The third example is quoted as follows: "But I did so with the consciousness" has been translated as: " فعلت ذلك مع خروج من " حقيقة " with the addition of two underlined prepositional particles in Arabic like (مع) and (من). It could rather be translated as: " لكنني فعلت ذلك مع الوعي ".

The fourth example, which says: "For this and other reasons I was somewhat lonely", we find the translation as: " ومع هذا الدليل كنت " على غيري الحال ". We can also see here an addition of two particles which include: (على) and (مع). It could rather be translated as: " فلهذا وأسباب أخرى كنت وحيدا ".

The fifth statement reads, "And I soon developed disagreeable manners" and has been translated as, " ومن غير طول كبرت في ".



الكرام". We can see the addition of two prepositional particles as well, such as: (من) and (في) have no place here. It could rather be translated as "وسرعان ما تطوّرت" "أخلاقاً بغیضة".

The last statement in these illustrations reads, "However, throughout this time" and has been translated as, "مع هذا في كل هذا" "السنوات". Also here the two underlined particles have been added as: (مع) and (في). It could rather be read as: "ومع ذلك، طوال هذا الوقت", all of which are clear examples of

students making errors in translating prepositional particles from English into Arabic respectively.

### OMISSION

As shown in Table 1, about (31) errors of omission were found. This clearly shows that the errors in this category are lower than in the other two categories. In the next table, Table 3, the errors are illustrated and then discussed as follows:

Table 3: Errors of Omission

العبارات Statements	الأخطاء Errors	الترجمة الصحيحة Correct Translation
Had no effect <u>on</u> the man	لا يمس ذلك الرجل	لم يكن لها تأثير <u>على</u> الرجل
Not able <u>to</u> imagine	لا يستطيع أن يشبهه	غير قادر <u>على</u> التخيل
<u>through</u> the pine forest	ذهبت جانب الجنوب	<u>عبر</u> غابة الصنوبر
75 miles <u>to</u> the Dawson	75 ميلس	75 ميلاً <u>إلى</u> داوسون
Seemed <u>to</u> be	أن تبين	بدأ <u>كأنه</u>
<u>For</u> the old camp	كانت جامعة القديمة	<u>للمخيم</u> القديم
<u>To</u> look <u>at</u>	كي أن تنظر	<u>للتنظر</u> في
<u>Across</u> the mountain	نهاية جبل	<u>فوق</u> الجبل

The first statement in the table above reads, "Had no effect on the man", it has been translated as, "لا يمس ذلك الرجل". The translator has omitted the English preposition (on) which should be translated as, "لم يكن لها تأثير على الرجل" which is more in keeping with the context of the statement.

The second example quoted is: "Not able to imagine", which has been translated as: "لا

"يستطيع أن يشبهه". Also here the English preposition (to) has been omitted in the TLT, which should rather be translated as "to": "غير قادر على التخيل".

In the third statement: "through the pine forest" it was translated as: "ذهبت جانب الجنوب", omitting the English preposition (through). It could rather read: "عبر غابة الصنوبر".

The fourth statement quoted reads: "75 miles to the Dawson" has been translated as: "75 ميلس" the English preposition (to), has also been omitted. It could be translated as: "ميلا إلى داوسون 75".

The fifth statement: "Seemed to be", has been translated as: "أن تبين" and the English preposition (to) have been omitted. It could instead be translated as: "بدا كأنه". The preposition particle (ك) in Arabic will represent (to) in English, which is closer to the context of the text.

The sixth statement is: "For the old camp" has been translated as: "كانت جامعة القديمة" and the equivalence of the English preposition (for) has been omitted in the target text. It could rather be translated as: "للمخيم القديم" which is closer than the source text.

The seventh statement: "To look at" has been translated as: "كي أن تنظر" and the equivalence of two English prepositional

particles such as (to) and (at) have been omitted in the target language text. It could rather be translated as: "للنظر في", which would be closer to the source text.

The last statement in the table reads: "Across the mountain" and has been translated as: "نهاية الجبل" by omitting the English preposition equivalent (Across) in the target text, which should be translated as: "فوق الجبل", which is closer to the meaning in the source text.

## SUBSTITUTION

Like the other categories mentioned above, substitution is another factor where students made errors in translating English prepositions into Arabic. In fact, this category is the one with the most errors in this study as its frequency reaches up to (59) of the total repetitions. The table below lists some of these repetitions. This is followed by the discussion.

العبارات Statements	الأخطاء Errors	الترجمة الصحيحة Correct Translation
<u>Before</u> they could fall <u>to</u> the Snow	من أن يقطع في البارد	قبل أن تسقط على الثلج
<u>In</u> the air	من الريح	في الهواء
Newcomer <u>in</u> the land	أول الوقت من ذاك الأرض	جديد العهد في الأرض
<u>In</u> the things of life	من كل أمر في حياته	في أمور الحياة
<u>By</u> temperature	من تمفرايتو	حسب درجة الحرارة
No Sun <u>in</u> the Sky	ليس هناك الشمس من السماء	ليس هناك شمس في السماء
Farther <u>on to</u> the North	هو الأب على الجنوديين	أبعد إلى الجنوب

The first statement in this category reads, "Before they could fall to the Snow" was translated as, "من ان يقطع في البارد". We can see how the English prepositional particles (before) and (to) have been replaced by other equivalents in the target text. However, it could also be translated as "قبل" "أن تسقط على الأرض". Formally, the particle equivalents should be (على and قبل), but the translator has replaced them with (من and في), which is not acceptable in this case.

The second statement in the quoted text is: "In the air", which has been translated as: "من الريح" by replacing the prepositional particle (in) in the source text ST with (من) instead of (في) in the target text TT. It could rather be translated as: "في الهواء" as it corresponds in the target text.

The third statement is: "Newcomer in the land", the statement has been translated as: "أول الوقت من ذلك الأرض" by replacing the English prepositional particle (in), which is equivalent to (في) in the target text (TT), with (من), which is equivalent to (from) in the source language. It could rather be translated as: "جديد العهد في الأرض", which would correspond to the equivalent in the source text.

The fourth statement reads as follows: "In the things of life" and it has been translated as: "من كل أمر في حياته" by replacing the English prepositional particle (in) with the prepositional particle (from) in the source text. It could rather be translated as: "في الأمور الحياتية", which is closer to the equivalent in the source text.

The fifth statement read as follows: "By temperature" and translated as: "من تمفرايتو", by replacing the English prepositional particle (By) with the Arabic preposition (From), it could be translated as: "حسب درجة الحرارة", which is closer to the source text.

The sixth statement was "No Sun in the Sky", it was translated as: "ليس هناك شمس من السماء" by replacing the English preposition particle (in) with (from) in the target text equivalent. It could rather be translated as: "ليس هناك شمس في السماء", which is closer to the meaning in the source text.

The seventh and final statement in this part reads as follows: "Farther on to the North" and has been translated as: "هو الأب على الجنودين" by replacing the English prepositional particle (on to) with (on) in the target text. It could rather be translated as: "أبعد إلى الجنوب", which is closer to the meaning in the source text.

## REASONS FOR THE ERRORS (SECOND OBJECTIVE)

To answer the second question of the research. What, then, are the causes of the errors in translating prepositions from English into Arabic encountered by Arabic language students at Federal College of Education (Technical) Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria? The researchers conducted a semi-structured interview with the sample students to find out the causes of these errors. As mentioned in the methodology, the interview consisted of two questions: Why do the students think they are unable

to correctly translate prepositional particles from English to Arabic? And how do they think they can overcome such a problem? The answers that the students gave in the interview were considered as the answer to the second question of this research.

When the students were asked about what causes the difficulties in translating these elements, they expressed different views on this issue, although the views seem to be the same, only the expressions differ. Therefore, the author of this article tries to summarise the views in their own words, as will be seen below. The first reason given by some students was that they did not know that prepositional particles differ in English and Arabic, while others said they did not know what the differences were between English and Arabic particles in translation, so the researchers consider this as a reason, as we will see below. As a second reason, some said that they find prepositions in English very difficult, in contrast to what they know in Arabic. Others said that they are confused in translating English particles in a way that they are not in Arabic. Looking at the meaning of the two expressions, the researchers also form a sentence as the second cause of the problem. The third reason is that some students think that they could not translate well because they found many prepositional particles in English for which they could not find an equivalent in Arabic. Others think that some particles in English have a double equivalent in Arabic, so they find it difficult to assign the meanings of some particles. Finally, the fourth reason shows that some students responded to the survey that the English particles do not have specific rules, while others said that the Arabic particles have

rules that the English ones do not, so they found it difficult to compare the translation.

According to the above responses of the subjects, which are so closed in meaning, four reasons that lead to such errors in translating prepositional particles from English to Arabic were summarised by the researchers:

- (1) Prepositional particles in English are different from prepositional particles in Arabic.
- (2) The prepositional particles are more complicated in English than in Arabic.
- (3) The number of prepositional particles in English is twice that in Arabic.
- (4) There are no fixed rules for the use of English prepositions as Arabic had.

As the researchers noted, the reasons for these errors could be that students rely heavily on monolingual dictionaries that only reflect the basic lexical meaning of each word. Another important reason could be the students' belief that Arabic rules were also applicable to English. Therefore, they applied Arabic rules to their English translation, which then sounded very strange and erroneous, since Arabic and English belong to two different language families whose language systems are also different.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The errors in translating prepositional particles from English to Arabic found in the first data collection method, the reasons for these errors and the possible solutions to overcome these errors found in the second data collection method represent the findings of the current study. Recommendations and suggestions for further studies are given below:

1. Arab students should familiarise themselves with the different linguistic aspects of English grammar by learning it and comparing and contrasting it with Arabic grammar.
2. Students can use bilingual dictionaries (English-Arabic/Arabic-English) to find English or Arabic equivalents.
3. They should learn not to always rely on literal translation. This is because the two languages differ from each other in terms of grammatical rules and regulations.
4. They should remember to follow the grammatical rules of the target language they are translating into.
5. The NCCE (National Council for Colleges of Education) in Nigeria should recommend that the translation course be compulsory for English-Arabic students in every year of their studies.
6. Translation teachers should make English-Arabic students aware of the differences and similarities between the English and Arabic language systems. To do this, they should provide them with sample translations that they can put into practise.
7. English-Arabic students should be taught to avoid literal translations as much as possible, as English and Arabic belong to two different language families whose language systems are very different.
8. Students should be encouraged to use bilingual dictionaries (English-Arabic/ Arabic-English standard dictionaries) to check the meaning of words.
9. Translation lessons should focus on English-Arabic and Arabic-English translation.

When looking at the students' responses to the question of how to overcome the problems of translating prepositional particles from English into Arabic, the researchers summarised four suggestions from their point of view, including the following:

1. The problems could be overcome by acquiring more knowledge about the rules of prepositional particles, both in English and Arabic.
2. The problems could be overcome by practising English-Arabic translation frequently.
3. The problems could be overcome by using multilingual and monolingual dictionaries and other special translation books when translating.
4. Students should be trained not to use literal translation.

We hope that the study will be of greater relevance to educators, students, translation scholars and policy makers. This is because the difficulties in translation are crucial and persistent. It is expected that the study will provide significant background on the difficulties faced by Arabic students in translation in Nigerian educational institutions, especially the students of Federal College of Education (Technical) Gusau, as they are less proficient in English. The study appears to be the first attempt to capture and classify Arab students' difficulties and incompetence in translation in Nigerian Colleges of Education. It will also help the different levels of students such as undergraduates, postgraduates and academics in conducting

similar studies and research. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide perspective to those who will be teaching and learning or working in translation agencies in the future.

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