

Translating Proper Nouns from Arabic into English: Barriers and Procedures

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the barriers that students encounter while translating proper nouns and to identify the procedures used by the students in the translation process. The researchers have developed a translation test in which twenty students were asked to translate twenty-nine underlined proper nouns which were subdivided into three categories: personal names, geographical places, and institutions and organizations. Findings show that students encounter many barriers such as (1) lacking specialized knowledge in religious, historical and political proper nouns; (2) having to choose from more than one equivalent for the same noun, and (3) not having enough dictionary equivalents for proper nouns. Findings also suggest that there is no single formula for translating proper nouns. Different procedures are applied in translating them such as using recognized translations and couplets especially for translating geographical places. Recognized methods of translation also meet with several challenges when translating names of organizations and institutions.

Keywords: Arabic, barriers, procedures, proper nouns, translation