

Common Practice Errors Related to Syntactic Structures in English-into-Arabic Translation

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Abstract

This paper handles common practice errors related to syntax in English-into-Arabic translation. The researcher collected material from student translations at BA and MA levels, translated texts, and subtitled or dubbed movies and documentaries. The researcher categorized the data and provided a discussion and interpretation of the errors. He found out that such errors can be attributed to several factors: incompetence in the SL or the TL or both, translator's attitude, misunderstanding of modification (what constituent modifies what), shallow encyclopedic knowledge of the translator, ignoring the context, and influence of dialects.

Key words: errors, translation, Arabic, English, syntax, competence

Introduction and Background

Psychologists have told us that individuals acting alone do not normally cause too much trouble; it is only when they form into crowds that they become unmanageable. Similarly, individual lexical items , can only stage sporadic strikes; it is when they group into long syntactic stretches that they begin really to launch all-out assaults on the translator. (Wong 2006: 130)

The researcher would like to point out that literature on or about this topic per se is rare. Most of what one finds is within language acquisition which is not the core of this paper. Common errors in translation are rarely addressed in the way they are in this paper. Therefore, section about a review of related literature would only be imposed to fulfill the general format of a research paper rather than for its own sake. So, the researcher discusses what is available of literature within the introduction to give the reader a background of the topic.

Translation is more and more practiced, especially with the development of technology and the production of cultural material that needs to attenuate language boundaries. Translators commit errors some of which have become common because they are repeated without being highlighted to be avoided.

Wilss (1980: 118) argues that the translator depends on

his interlingual text synchronization capability. This capability consists of two subcapabilities which stand in complementary relation to each other. He must have an SL text-analytical competence and a corresponding TL text-reproductive competence. Both competences must cover, in order to guarantee an optimal transfer, all text-constitutive elements.

The translator's awareness of the different levels of meaning is an issue emphasized by many scholars in the field of translation. Wilss (1980: 85) proposes the following points as guidelines for translators:

1. the defining of textual segments and structures on the microcontextual level (within the clause/sentence), and
2. the defining of textual segments and structures on the microcontextual level (going beyond the clause/sentence rank).

Many reasons stand behind common translation errors: lack of comprehension, inappropriateness to audience, and inappropriate time. They can occur at different levels: language, pragmatics, and culture. They are encountered as over or under-translation, discursive or semantic inadequacy, etc. Elements are mingled and numerous cases overlap. Such classifications will always have either too few or too many terms, at least for as long as there is no clear awareness of why translation errors should be classified in the first place (Loddegaard and Dollerup, 1992: 282). Pym (1998: 60) indicates that when a text undergoes many transformations in the TL, it is no longer a translation. Pym goes on "translation culture' could be a rough synonym for a 'translation regime,' understood as a set of 'implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge." Since the task of translators is critical to the production of scholarly discourse, they need to be sensitive to the

peculiarities of the SLT. Along this line Bennet (2006) asserts that failing to do so “may effectively compromise the perceived truth value of the assertions made.” Cobley (2011: 108) argues “The act of interpretation . . . is an act of assignment.” Therefore, the translator needs to be careful in his interpretation of the SLT for proper rendition. The interconnectivity of the clauses that make a discourse is vital for its interpretation, and eventually, its rendition. Discourse connectors play a vital role in determining sense. Caenepeel (2011: 5) indicates, “. . . the truth-conditions for a discourse consisting of more than one sentence cannot simply be formulated as the sum of the truth-conditions of each of the sentences in isolation.”

Even though we might think of the situation as Pym assumes, I find it necessary to find a way to categorize errors so that translators can avoid them for the very reasons he goes on to specify.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims at investigating the effect of common errors related to syntactic structures encountered while translating from English into Arabic. The researcher also tries to call the attention of translators and students of translation, language, and practitioners to those errors so that they are handled with care.

Method of the Study

1. Data Collection:

The sets of data were collected from several sources: practice translation courses; TV news bulletins, documentaries, and dubbed or subtitled movies; and text and reference books that the researcher has come across. Collected examples were so numerous, but only some representative samples are used in this paper.

2. Data Analysis:

Errors were categorized according to their types. Errors related to redundancy, word order, passivization, etc. are put together. The researcher tries to explain the sources of these errors to be avoided. He focuses on cases where syntactic structure is optionally deviant. Wilss (1982) says, “Obligatory shifts in syntax occur when the translator, in rendering an SL textual segment is forced to find new ways of expressing it in the TL.”

In the following sections, common errors that are related to syntactic structures are given and discussed to illustrate this issue.

1. Redundancy

Arabic and English, generally speaking, exhibit some differences that are related to the function of tense. A misunderstanding of the function of a given tense or aspect may lead to a mistranslation of the text in which it occurs. So the translator needs to be aware of the similarities and differences between tenses in Arabic and English. Al-Aswad (1983: 74) proposes:

Arabic and English tenses are similar in function, in that the Arabic perfect and the English past are used for narration, and Arabic imperfect and English non-past are used for describing the situation.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
The leader has been the faithful guardian of our nation.	كان القائد وما يزال حارس أمتنا المخلص	ما يزال القائد حارس أمتنا المخلص

The translator renders the present perfect (has been) as كان وما يزال for a situation/action that began in the past and is still true up to the present moment. The expression (ما يزال) can express such a situation/action. This means that there is no need to say (كان وما يزال) because (كان) only marks the beginning of the action which is already expressed expression by (ما يزال). The same can be said about any expression that has the pattern فعل وما يزال يُفعل such as صدر وما يزال يصدر "has been exported" mistakenly translated as صدر وما يزال يصدر. However, this error does not result in gain or loss in translation.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
Women who take birth control pills are more subjected to blood clots than the others	النساء اللاتي يتناولن حبوب منع الحمل أكثر عرضة للجلطات أكثر من غيرهن	النساء اللاتي يتناولن حبوب منع الحمل أكثر عرضة للجلطات من غيرهن

The translator unnecessarily repeats أكثر in the text.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
Things were falling down	كانت الأشياء تسقط إلى أسفل	كانت الأشياء تسقط
The army units were going forward	كانت وحدات الجيش تتقدم إلى الأمام	كانت وحدات الجيش تتقدم

The translator provides a literal translation by adding the prepositional phrases إلى الأسفل which is implied in تسقط and إلى الأمام which is implied in تتقدم.

2. Misplacement of the Definite Article الـ

The definite article in Arabic can be used with nouns, adjective, and adverbs, but it cannot be used with بعض and غير, except when غير is not followed by a noun. In some cases the definite article is mistakenly used with articles such as (غير).

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
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1.Privileges should not be given to the unqualified persons	يجب أن لا تعطى الامتيازات للأشخاص الغير مؤهلين	يجب أن لا تعطى الامتيازات للأشخاص غير المؤهلين
2.Metroids destroy each other	تحطم النيازك بعضها البعض	تحطم النيازك بعضها بعضا

In 'Translated Text' in (1), we should not add the definite article *ال* to the word *غير* because it refers to *الأشخاص* which is already definite, so there is no need to redefine it. However, it should be used with the word *مؤهلين*. This common error does not really affect the meaning, though the user sounds inversed in Arabic. *ال* could be used with *غير* and *بعض* when they are not followed by nouns; when they come at the end of an utterance. For example, *لا أتكلم كثيرا كما يفعل الغير* (I do not talk much like the others).

In (2), the definite article is wrongly used with *بعض*. Though the reader gets the message, the structure is not idiomatic. In this case, the acceptable structure is *بعضها بعضا*. Moreover, *البعض* indicates that only some members of a group are involved.

3. Problems with Coordinators and Subordinators:

It is evident that there are common errors resulting from the misuse of certain Arabic coordinators.

3.1 Using Two Successive Coordinators:

The translator uses two coordinators in a row.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
The computer has sped up the development of science and made our life easier	لقد سرع الحاسوب تقدم العلم، كما وإنه قد جعل حياتنا أسهل	لقد سرع الحاسوب تقدم العلم، و جعل حياتنا أسهل

The expression *كما وإنه* exhibits redundancy in coordination. *كما* and *و* have the same syntactic function and meaning: they are both used to show apposition. So, there is no need for two such items in one position. Using *كما إنه*, *كما*, or *و* is enough to express this idea. *كما* is used for the addition of another idea to a previously mentioned one.

3.2 Improper Substitution of a Coordinator for a Subordinator

In this case the translator wrongly assumes that the coordinator *و* can substitute the subordinator *أن* as in this example:

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
He previously said that we discussed this topic.	سبق وقال أننا قد ناقشنا هذا الموضوع	سبق أن قال أننا قد ناقشنا هذا الموضوع سبق قوله أننا . . .

The use of the coordinator و with a verb does not conform to the grammar of Arabic. The subordinator أن should be used: سبق أن قال, or it could be سبق قوله. This error indicates a problem with competence in Arabic grammar.

4. Misplacement of Modifiers and Other Elements:

It is a well-known fact that the position of a modifier with respect to the modified influences the meaning. This fact is sometimes overlooked in the process of translation resulting in wrong renditions.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
I personally came to tell you.	جئت لأخبرك شخصيا.	جئت شخصيا لأخبرك.

In the English expression, the adverb 'personally' modifies the pronoun 'I' only, and it is used to emphasize the idea that the subject, "I," and not anybody else, was the one who carried out the action. The word شخصيا 'personally' modifies the addressee represented with the pronoun ك 'you' because it is placed at the end of the expression, for such adverbs in Arabic modify the closest preceding noun position. So, the given translation does not provide the intended meaning. To modify the subject, شخصيا must be placed after the verb whose inflection shows that the subject is 'I.'

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
Studios are actively rebuilding the sites to film them before winter.	تعيد الاستديوهات بناء المواقع لتصويرها بنشاط قبل الشتاء	تعيد الاستديوهات بناء المواقع بنشاط لتصويرها قبل الشتاء

The adverb 'actively' modifies 'rebuilding,' but in the translation, بنشاط modifies تصوير giving a different meaning. To give an equivalent meaning, بنشاط should be placed after المواقع.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
To specify the vision of each pilot	لتحديد كل رؤية طيار	لتحديد رؤية كل طيار

'Each' modifies 'pilot,' but كل 'each' in the translation modifies رؤية 'vision' providing a different meaning. So, it should be placed after طيار.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
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The enemy destroyed them before they even engaged in a real battle	قضى العدو عليهم قبل دخول معركة حتى	قضى العدو عليهم حتى قبل دخول معركة حقيقية
A bear eats everything even oysters.	يأكل الدب أي شيء والمحار حتى	يأكل الدب أي شيء، حتى المحار

In the translation, حتى 'even' comes at the end of the translated text suggesting that there is more to be said. For the intended meaning, it should be in the position shown in the suggested translations. These errors indicate translator's incompetence.

5. Misplacement of the Negative Article لا

The negative article لا negates the element that it modifies, when positioned before it. Sometimes translators mistakenly make it modify the wrong element. This mistake occurs frequently in translated texts so that it has become common as in this example:

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
We must not give up	لا يجب أن نستسلم	يجب أن لا نستسلم

The LT does not show option. In the translated text, لا modifies يجب, negating necessity. In this position, the expression لا يجب indicates that there is an option whether to give up or not (i.e. a possibility not an obligation). Therefore, a back translation could be "we don't have to give up."

6. Errors Related to Passive Structure

Under the principle of naturalness, Arabic does not prefer agentive passive, i.e., a structure that English allows with no restrictions. Along these lines, Mouakket (1986: 47) argues that in the case of a passive Arabic sentence:

the agent is not found on the surface structure, and this is a characteristic of the Arabic passive voice. In such a case, the agent deletion is to be considered an obligatory operation in the procedure of choosing the subject of the sentence.

The following example illustrates this point:

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
The letter was sent by the president.	أرسل الخطاب من قبل الرئيس.	أرسل الرئيس الخطاب.

There is agentive passive in English. The translated Arabic there is agentive passive where من قبل is parallel to the English "by the president." It seems that the Arabic من قبل is a syntactic borrowing from English because it is alien to the Arabic structure and there is no evidence for

this kind of use in the Arabic literature before this one was imported. It seems that scholars are agreed that Arabic prefers an active structure rather than an agentive passive one like the ill-formed one above. Al-Najjar (1984: 160) asserts, "the active voice structure is more preferable and more well-formed." Also, Cown (1958: 59) and Wright (1967: 269-70) are agreed that if the agent is present, the active voice must be used. The Arabic expression *من قبل* is used in a completely different sense; it means at one's side. This meaning is evident in this Hadith (Prophetic Tradition): *أنت على ثغرة من ثغر الإسلام فلا يوتين من قبلك*

where *من قبلك* cannot be interpreted as a by-phrase. It simply means "at your side" because the meaning of the Hadith is roughly "You are guarding Islam at your position, so let it not be undermined (attacked or criticized) at your side." In other words, it means 'be a good guard.

The other meaning for *من قبل* is 'from the side of' as in an expression like this one *جاء مبعوث من قبل الرئيس الأميركي* It literally means 'an envoy came from the side of the American president' in which *من قبل* cannot mean 'by (the American president)' because the overall meaning of the expression does not allow this.

The translator should make sure that *من قبل* is not given as a mistranslation of the English by-phrase. Here, it is better to render English agentive passive into Arabic active for naturalness.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
The trunk of a cactus tree consists of a spongy structure that can hold water	تتشكل ساق شجرة الصبار من قبل تركيب اسفنجي يمكنه حفظ الماء	تتشكل ساق شجرة الصبار من تركيب اسفنجي يمكنه حفظ الماء/الاحتفاظ بالماء

The translator uses *من قبل* though the English structure is not passive. The Arabic given translation suggests that the spongy structure is an agent that makes the tree, which is not the case. The relationship between the structure and the tree is a situation of existence and of agent and patient. Therefore, this sentence cannot be rendered as agentive passive because it would give the wrong message in the TLT. So, the suggested translation is more appropriate.

There is a tendency for some people to use the passive void *تم* and its derivations, especially in the media.

Sometimes, the use of *تم* is acceptable when it means 'completion'.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
The assembly of the blades must be completed today	يجب أن يتم تجميع الشفرات اليوم	

The use of *يتم* gives the intended meaning of the SLT because it indicates the completion of the action. The Arabic passive could also be used here *يجب أن تُجمع الشفرات اليوم*. Another way is *يجب أن تنتهي من جمع الشفرات اليوم*.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion

The data that we collected helped us find diamond.	لقد ساعدتنا البيانات التي تم جمعها على العثور على الماس	لقد ساعدتنا البيانات التي جُمعت على العثور على الماس
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Also, the use of تم here is acceptable because it indicates the completion of the action. However, the passive voice is better. Moreover, the translation can be in active voice in Arabic if we are sure of the agent. So it could be لقد ساعدتنا البيانات التي جمعناها على العثور على الماس.

However, there are many cases where تم is inappropriately used as in these examples:

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
ISON is being watched today.	تتم اليوم مراقبة المذنب آيسون	تجري اليوم مراقبة المذنب آيسون

The translator mistakenly uses يتم to indicate a passive action in progress to match that in English. يتم here means ‘will end’. يجري can be used to express this idea as in the suggestion.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
Please be informed that spending from the budget will be after two months	يرجى العلم أن الصرف من الميزانية سيتم بعد شهرين	يرجى العلم أن الصرف من الميزانية يبدأ بعد شهرين

The use of سيتم is inaccurate; it means “spending will end” while the SLT indicates ‘beginning’. This necessitates the use of يبدأ ‘start.’

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
The reservoir of water that gathered over years is being depleted.	إن مخزون الماء الذي تجمع على مدى سنين يتم الآن استنزافه	يجري الآن استنزاف مخزون الماء الذي تجمع على مدى سنين

Also, يتم indicates the end of depletion which is not so. The SLT asserts that depletion is going on. So the use of يجري is more accurate.

7. Errors Related to Genitive Structures

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
He is the ruler and the guardian of our nation.	هو حاكم و حارس بلدنا	إنه حاكم بلدنا و حارسه

Arabic does not allow compound genitive nouns as those in حاكم وحارس followed by a modifying third noun like بلدنا, giving the genitive sequence حاكم وحارس بلدنا. The acceptable sequence of such structure should be حاكم بلدنا وحارسه (مصطفى الغلايني، 1993: 213). Though the ill-formed translation does not affect the meaning, it looks as if provided by a non-native speaker of Arabic and a kind of literal translation violating the naturalness principle. This error may be seen one of those that function as a regularizing process in Arabic, especially when there is a lengthy imbedded material between the head and the second element when it becomes difficult to detect the pronoun and its antecedent. Also, it is better to start with إنه or يُعد because there is a BE form in SLT. However, it seems that this kind of error is becoming established in Arabic, especially when there is a string of words in between. In this case it becomes easier when they are juxtaposed, a manifestation of language change.

8. Imitating the English Subordinate Structure (Syntactic Borrowing)

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
The more the product is the more the income is.	كلما زاد الإنتاج كلما زاد الدخل	كلما ازداد الإنتاج ازداد الدخل.

The translated text suffers from two problems: the repetition of كلما and the use of the non-formal word زاد instead of ازداد. The word كلما is a subordinator. So it starts a subordinate (dependent). Therefore, the translated text is a fragment as such because it consists of two subordinate clauses. Here the translator is following the structure of the SLT while he is supposed to restructure the meaning following the structure of the TLT.

9. Errors Related to Word Order

English is basically an analytic language, i.e., it shows syntactic relationships by word order and function words. Arabic is basically synthetic, i.e., it shows syntactic relationships by its frequent and systematic use of inflected forms (Hawkins, 1980). The unmarked word order in English is SVO, while it is VSO in Arabic. Any other grammatically permissible word orders in both languages are marked. Bakir (1980: 6) and Al-Najjar (1984: 154) point out that Arabic has these word orders: VSO, SVO, VOS, SOV, OSV, and OVS. Moreover, Gunther (2012: 4) states that “different syntactic positions in the functional structure of the clause overtly express different interpretations.” The following example illustrates this point:

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
The boys left early	الاولاد غادروا مبكرين	غادر الاولاد مبكرين

The SLT has an unmarked word order (SVO). This means that there is no special focus on any part of the sentence. The Arabic translated text is marked because it is SVO which means that there is special focus on the subject. So the Arabic version here shows gain in meaning by

changing the word order from unmarked to marked. Therefore, the suggested Arabic translation is more accurate because it maintains the natural word order.

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
Outrage was latent in the bull	كان كامن غضب جامح في الثور	كان غضب جامح يكمن في الثور

The verbal element كان (and its group) cannot be followed with the word order: Adjective + Noun (head) + Adjective (predicate) as in the structure كامن غضب جامح . The two possible structures: (1) كان غضب جامح يكمن في الثور or (2) كمن غضب جامح في الثور .

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
Authorities said that unidentified persons curried out the attack	قالت السلطات إن الهجوم قام بتنفيذه مجهولون	قالت السلطات إن مجهولين نفذوا الهجوم

The translator alters the order of elements; he brings the object الهجوم 'the attack' as the subject and uses a pronoun that refers to it with the verb تنفيذه to fill the gap. In the SLT, the focus is on 'unidentified persons' which is lost in the given translation when it is moved to the end of the sentence. Also, the translator comes up with an unnecessarily complicated structure for the reader. So the suggestion is more accurate.

10. Shift of Focus (Expectancy)

Main ideas are expressed in main clauses; peripheral ideas, in peripheral structures, subordinate clauses or phrases. Sometimes, the translator may lose track of such sensitive relationship between ideas and structures resulting in the wrong assignment between structures and ideas. Nida (1983: 36) points out

... shifts involve an increase in markedness. The tension which is introduced in such shifts between the normal and the non-normal, between the usual and the unusual, between the expected and the unexpected, accounts for significantly greater impact involved in such shifts.

The source text	Translated Text	Suggestion
It came in the news that an Israeli soldier was slightly injured in a clash with some Palestinian demonstrators in which two Palestinian children were killed.	جاء في الأخبار أن طفلين فلسطينيين قد قتلوا في صدام بين متظاهرين فلسطينيين وجنود اسرائيليين وقد أصيب فيه جندي إصابة طفيفة	جاء في الأخبار أن جنديا إسرائيليا أصيب بجروح طفيفة في صدام بين جنود إسرائيليين ومتظاهرين فلسطينيين، قتل فيه طفلان فلسطينيان.

We notice that the given translation does not maintain the focus in the TL. The translator changed the structure of the main idea (injury of the Israeli soldier) to be in a peripheral clause, and the (killing of the Palestinian children) to be in a main clause. This violates the principle of loyalty. Therefore, the given translation is ill-formed because of the shift of focus. We can assume that such an error may occur as a result of one or more of the following reasons:

1. Indifference of the translator about the task of translation;
2. The translator's incompetence in one of the SL or the TL or both;
3. The translator's incompetence in translation as a skill;
4. The translator's intention in creating this kind of noise (distortion of the message); and/or
5. The structure he is dealing with is too lengthy so that the translator loses track of which ideas are expressed in main clauses and which are expressed in peripheral ones.

11. Errors Related to Comparative Structure

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
The two animals are more similar than what you believe	إن الحيوانين متشابهين أكثر مما تعتقدون	إن الحيوانين أكثر شبها مما تعتقدون

Because the translation is very close to the SLT, it yields an odd structure, though the reader can get the message. The suggestion provides the appropriate structure. This indicates translator's incompetence.

12. Errors Related to Misunderstanding of Prepositional Phrases

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
(1)When sea water moves in we say we have high tide	عندما يتحرك الماء إلى داخل البحر نقول لدينا مد عال	عندما يتحرك الماء إلى داخل اليابسة نقول لدينا مد
(2)We had to move away from there.	كان علينا الابتعاد عن هناك	كان علينا الابتعاد من هناك
(3)He teaches this technology in schools all over the world	يعلم هذه التقنية في مدارس حول العالم	يعلم هذه التقنية في مدارس في جميع أرجاء العالم

In 'Translated text' in (1), literal translation causes the problem. This leads to misunderstanding to the meaning of the sentence that the word المد means (the case in which sea water covers more

of the shore land) and not inside the sea. So *داخل البحر* is inappropriate; the concept would be that of low tide which is in Arabic *الجزر*. We may say *داخل اليابسة*. The translator here does not figure out that there is ellipsis: ‘moves in land.’ So the translator thinks that the movement of the water is inside the sea. This error changes the meaning from high tide to low tide.

In (2), the translator provides a literal translation of the preposition ‘from’ as *عن* which seems colloquial. The proper translation is *من* which collocates with the words *ابتعاد* and *هناك*. In some other contexts, such as with the words *ابتعاد* and *خطر*, we would say *الابتعاد عن الخطر*. The problem seems to be at the transfer stage. The translator keeps in mind in the SL structure while trying to convey the meaning in the TL, rather than abandoning the SL structure and considering the TL structure only.

In (3), the translator mistakenly renders ‘all over the world’ as *حول العالم* which actually means ‘round the world.’ The best translation is *في جميع/ثتى أرجاء العالم*. Again, the translator does not recognize the difference in meaning between ‘all over the world’ and ‘round the world.’ This seems to be a competence problem.

13. Errors Related to Agreement:

There are many errors related to agreement. In most of the cases, if not all, the problem could be related to language competence. These errors can be classified as follows:

13.1 Subject-Verb Agreement:

13.1.1 Subject-Verb Agreement (number):

This error is evident in many cases illustrated as follows:

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
The two ministers held a meeting to discuss the problem.	قاما الوزيران بعقد اجتماع لمناقشة المشكل	قام الوزيران بعقد . . . عقد الوزيران اجتماعا .

When the sentence starts with the verb, it comes in its singular form. So the dual and the plural inflections are not appropriate in such a case. Actually, the second suggestion is better.

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
The scientists jot down important notes. (context shows two scientists)	العالمان كتبوا ملاحظات هامة	كتب العالمان ملاحظات مهمة العالمان كتبوا

In the context, there are two scientists. So the number inflection should be the dual **كُتبا** if a marked structure is desired. But the suggested unmarked text is better.

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
Both of you are excellent leaders.	كلاكما قائد ممتاز	كل منكما قائد ممتاز كلاكما قائدان ممتازان

The problem is in the concord between **كلاكما** and **قائد** because the first denotes dual number while the second denotes singular number. So the text should either be **كل منكما قائد** or **كلاكما قائدان** for proper concord.

13.1.2 Subject-Verb Agreement (Gender):

This error is related to two sources. In one, the translator might be translating from the script where the gender of the speaker or the addressee is not clear because some English pronouns do not show gender. Consider this example:

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
We both (f) train together	نحن الاثنان نتدرب معا	نحن الاثنتان نتدرب معا

The dialogue is between two girls. However, the translation indicates that the speaker and the addressee are males. So this calls for the suggested translation.

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
You want me to go with you?	أنت تريدني أن أذهب معك؟	أنت تريدني أن أذهب معكِ؟

In the same dialogue, a girl is asking another girl, which, again, calls for the suggested translation.

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
1.Those females were brought from the national park.	هذان الأثنان جاتا من المنتزه الوطني	جاءت هاتان الأثنيان من المنتزه الوطني
2.Produce a gun with range controller	إنتاج مدفع ذات ضابط مدى	إنتاج مدفع ذي ضابط مدى (مزود بضابط)

In (1), the problem is in gender agreement where هذان is masculine dual while the noun it modifies الأنتان is feminine dual, thus the suggested text. In (2), مدفع is singular masculine while the relative pronoun ذات is singular feminine, which calls for ذي.

13.2 Noun-Pronoun Agreement:

13.2.1 Noun-Pronoun Agreement: Human vs non-human

The translator deals with non-humans as humans with regard to related pronouns as illustrated in the following examples:

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
We could not follow the wolves because they went deep in the forest.	لم نستطع اللحاق بالذئاب فقد توغلوا في الغابة	لم نستطع اللحاق بالذئاب؛ فقد توغلت في الغابة (لأنها توغلت)

This error occurs very frequently. It could be related to the influence of colloquial dialects where there is no distinction between human and non-human pronoun reference. In this example, the inflection in توغلوا is plural masculine human with ذئاب which is plural non-human which requires the pronoun توغلت.

14. Errors Related to Misuse of Pronouns

14.1 Improper Assignment of Pronouns

This problem is especially evident in documentaries. It occurs in two ways: the use of human related pronouns with animals, and the use of masculine pronouns with feminine nouns.

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
1.Experts of whale behavior expect that many new whales will be born at the same time.	يتوقع خبراء في الحيتان أن عددا من الحيتان الجديدة سيولدون في وقت واحد.	يتوقع خبراء في الحيتان أن عددا من الحيتان الجديدة ستولد في وقت واحد.
2.He needs some sharks. He needs them for his research	يحتاج بعض أسماك القرش. يحتاجهم لأبحاثه	يحتاج بعض أسماك القرش. يحتاجها لأبحاثه (يحتاج بعض أسماك القرش لأبحاثه)
3.The dominant bison drives other males from the herd.	يبعد الجاموس المهيمن الذكور الآخرين عن القطيع	يبعد الجاموس المهيمن الذكور الأخرى عن القطيع

The problem arises from the fact that the translator does not realize that in Arabic feminine-like pronouns are used with non-humans and inanimates. In this case, the term سيولدون (1) indicates that the antecedent is human masculine plural. The fact is that it is الحيتان which is plural masculine non-human. Therefore, the proper expression is ستولد. In (2) يحتاجهم the pronoun هم is used with masculine plural (them-m.). The correct form is يحتاجها with the pronoun ها (them-f.). However, collapsing the two sentences into one might be better. In (3) الآخرين (the others-m.) indicates masculine plural. The correct form is الأخرى (the others-f.).

14.2 Improper Inflection with Pronouns

The original text	Translated text	Suggestion
1. These animals would be wanted for justice	لكانوا هذه الحيوانات مطلوبين للعدالة	لكانت هذه الحيوانات مطلوبة للعدالة
2. The policeman found the criminal in an abandoned house	وجدوا رجال الشرطة المجرم في بيت مهجور	وجد رجال الشرطة المجرم في بيت مهجور

Though the subject is plural, the verb which precedes it cannot show number inflection. Therefore, كانوا renders the sentence ungrammatical. In this case, the singular form كان should be used with the agreement for non-human plural. The reader of this translation in (2) would consider رجال الشرطة the object because the plural masculine subject is cliticized to the verb وجد thus وجدوا. So back translation yields 'They found the policemen . . .' Therefore, the only endophoric reference for a plural pronoun subject is 'the policemen (leaving المجرم loose),' but the context does not allow this anaphoric relationship. In the SLT, 'the policemen' is the subject and 'the criminal' is the object. Therefore, the suggested translation is more accurate.

15. Errors Related to Errors in SLT

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
Your lawyer is better than me.	محاميك أفضل مني	محاميك أفضل من محامي

In the context, the comparison is between the lawyer of the speaker and that of the addressee. So the given translation does not give the intended meaning of the SLT as the suggested one does. This means that the translator should be aware of the progress of the context to provide an accurate translation. An auto-correction process should be at function to capture such problems and filter them from the TLT, unless they are intended to be so by the author of the SLT.

16. Errors Related to Confusing Grammatical Categories:

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
There were 150 individuals on	كان على متنها 150	كان على متنها 150 فردا

board the plane.	أفرادا	
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In this case, the translator literally renders 'individuals' the plural أفرادا. At first it seems to be the correct translation, but the whole Arabic structure is considered, it cannot be so. Here, it should be فردا 'specification' rather than the plural. Therefore, it should be rendered as فردا.

17. Errors Related to Wrong Correction of SLT

In some other cases, the translator may incorrectly assume that there is an error in the SLT that requires correction.

The source text	Translated text	Suggestion
Cleopatra married her brother, Ptolemy.	زوجت كليوباترا أخاها بطليموس	تزوجت كليوباترا من أخيها بطليموس

The translator thinks that the SLT cannot be interpreted in other than the sense given in the translation: that "married her brother" means she caused him to marry someone; therefore, Cleopatra and Ptolemy cannot be a wife and a husband. This assumption comes from the fact that Cleopatra and Ptolemy are biologically a brother and a sister. This assumption is based on today's cultural norms. However, the historical fact states that Cleopatra and her biological brother Ptolemy did marry each other. This calls for the suggested translation. So the translator needs to be aware of such historical cultural matters and not to impose his own interpretation of the SLT on the TL reader. This calls for translators to widen their encyclopedic knowledge so that the auto-correction process does not fail.

Conclusion:

It is possible to come up with the following general conclusions:

1. Competence in the SL and TL systems is extremely vital for the process of translation in order to render correct translations. Many examples cited above prove this deficit and show how serious the results are.
2. Some of the errors do not really affect the meaning of the message. However, when we consider professional translation, even such errors should not be there. They show that there is a problem with language command that must be treated.
3. The translator should be aware of the fact that grammatical structures may greatly contribute to the meaning of the text. Word order and constituent modification are examples to the point. Grammatical structures also indicate what the author of the SLT focuses on, which the translator must maintain in the TLT.

4. Redundancy in grammatical structures, though does not affect the meaning, is also evident. It leads to wordiness and may also indicate language incompetence.
5. Naturalness of SLT is required even if the translator has to alter the structure. This especially needed in English agentive passive which, as scholars in the field of translation are agreed, should be rendered as active structure to achieve naturalness in Arabic. The translator should also be careful when dealing with the verb **تم** and its derivatives to avoid the low level media type of language. This is also evident in the improper use of pronouns, which reflects the presence of informal language.
6. The translator should maintain the focus of the author of the SLT, and should not impose his own attitude on the text whether he likes the topic or not.

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