

Unawareness of Common Errors in English and Its Impact on Human vs. Machine Translation Into Arabic

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Abstract—This study investigates the rate of unawareness of common errors in English and its impact on human vs. machine translation into Arabic. It analyzes the reaction of human and machine translators when encountering English sentences with common errors, and its impact on translation process. Translators are readers in the first place, they have to comprehend what they read in the SL in order to convey it in the TL. In order for the ST message to be correctly conveyed into the TL, detecting errors and correcting them before translating is a necessity. The study is conducted through presenting 40 SL texts and evaluating their 680 TL texts translated by 14 MA students of translation and 3 online machine translators. Results show that the rate of unawareness of common errors is 51% for human translators and 79% for machine translators.

Index Terms—common errors, machine translation, translation

I. INTRODUCTION

Committing mistakes is a characteristic feature of human beings. This is well-documented in the Arabic Islamic literature by the noble prophetic hadith “كل ابن آدم خطأ”, as well as in the English literature by the poet of the Enlightenment Alexander Pope’s famous saying “To Err is Human”. The terms error and mistake are sometimes used interchangeably, however, the two terms might have different connotations other times, with the first related to competence and the second to performance. Since committing mistakes is something unavoidable in one’s own language, then committing mistakes by the one whose language is not a mother tongue, the translator in our case, is inevitable in varying degrees. If we come to the case of machines, some say that machines are accurate and do not commit mistakes. This can be simply refuted when we realize that machines are invented by humans in the first place. Machine translators are just one example. However, it is evident that due to the rapid scientific progress and the cutting-edge technologies in all fields of knowledge, including machine translation (MT), one cannot deny the fact that error rates are being reduced to a minimum, particularly through employing the techniques of artificial intelligence (AI). Again, one can say that if human natural intelligence sometimes fails here and there, then AI failure is something natural!

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of common mistakes is an old one. It has been tackled and investigated by many scholars of linguistics. Williams (1995) tackles the issue of common errors by authoring a dictionary of easily confused words. She (1995) states that her dictionary does not only enable readers to find easily confused words, but also to know their meanings, pronunciation, and usage within different contexts in written and spoken language. Turton (1995) deals with grammatical errors that learners of English of various language backgrounds commit again and again. He (1995) says that even advanced learners of English sometimes commit basic mistakes. Hancock (2001), from which the corpus of the study is taken, investigates common errors through classifying them thematically, covering different areas of everyday life, such as work, travel, family, and education. In his book titled *Mind the Gaffe*, Trask (2001) states that although no one comes naturally equipped with mastering standard written English, with the latter becoming a prerequisite for professional people, yet, schools in most English-speaking countries have retreated from teaching standard English, a matter that led to the fact that even university graduates with good grades often find themselves with a poor command of Standard English. Fitikides (2002) explains that his book is designed to meet the requirements of students whose mother tongue is not English. His book is targeted to foreign learners of English. Although Fitikides (2002) claims that his book, or manual as he calls, is not exhaustive, yet he admits that the difficulties undertaken are real, being the result of observations that he made over a long period of time. In his book that is mainly dedicated to journalists and broadcasters, Parrish (2002, p. 171) states that he aims to improve communication skills, “preserve the existing literature by helping it remain readable for future generations”, and increase clarity of thinking. Burt (2002) writes that her book is a reference one, written for students as well as general readers, tackling the basic issues concerning errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and word usage. Moore (2005) tackles common mistakes at proficiency level and how to avoid them. She designed her book in the form of 10 tests, with answer key at the end of

the book. Marian (2014) writes that including all mistakes in English in a single book is an impossible desire, however, the topics he presents, as he says, will enable the reader to express himself like a native speaker in terms of grammar and syntax. Williams (2019) dedicates his book for investigating 100 common grammatical mistakes which he describes as *tragic*. He tackles punctuation mistakes as well. Jacobs (2019) investigates 200 grammatical mistakes that she promises those who read her book not to commit again. In her introduction, she states that developing a good grammatical structure is a necessity for two reasons: first, to achieve clear communication, which is fundamental in getting rid of any incoherence in speech; consequently, to avoid misunderstanding, and second, to avoid any wrong impression on the part of the hearer with regard to the linguistic competence of the speaker, especially when the latter is applying for a job. The present study takes a further step and tackles common errors from another perspective. It aims at exploring the reaction of translators, human and machine, when facing sentences that contain common errors, as well as calculating the rates of translators' unawareness of these errors.

III. METHODOLOGY

The corpus of the study comprises 40 English simple sentences, containing common errors, taken from Hancock (2001). These sentences were given to a group of 14 MA students of translation at University of Mosul, College of Arts, Dept. of Translation, to be translated into Arabic within about 3 hours in an exam-like setting, together with feeding 3 widely-used online machine translators: Google Translate, Bing Microsoft Translator, and SYSTRAN with the same sentences as well. The MT was done on April 9, 2022. The MA students were not told that the sentences they are going to translate contain common errors. However, they were invited to leave comments in case they find anything strange in anyone of the sentences. The present study is based on Hancock (2001) because he does not focus on grammatical errors only, rather he tackles errors related to the choice of lexical items. The latter are the ones that are more problematic, particularly in translation. Grammatical errors have rather a little impact when translation is involved. For example, a grammatically erroneous sentence such as *John happy*, in which the auxiliary verb is missing, will constitute no problem when translated into Arabic as *جون سعيد*. The same thing is true when the erroneous sentence *John play chess*, which lacks subject-verb agreement, is translated into *جون يلعب الشطرنج*.

The resulting 680 translations were analyzed to check the rate of unawareness of common errors in English and its impact on human vs. machine translation into Arabic. The analysis aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1-What is the rate of unawareness of common errors on the part of human vs. machine translators, and what is its impact on translation?
- 2-What is the reaction of translators (human and machine) when facing sentences with common errors? Are they going to translate the sentences with the errors retained? Are they going to correct the errors before engaging in the translation process?
- 3-Which are more competent in detecting common errors? Human or machine translators? Which one of the latter is more competent?

The analysis was carried out taking into account the following possible reactions on the part of human translators:

- 1-Being aware of the error, the translator corrects it, then translates the sentence.
- 2-Being unaware of the error, the translator translates the sentence as it is, i.e., with the error retained.
- 3-Being in doubt of the error, the translator translates the sentence as it is, i.e., with the error retained, yet leaves a comment with this regard. (The comment could be sometimes irrelevant!)
- 4-Being in doubt of the error, the translator skips the erroneous part of the sentence.
- 5-Other cases: erroneous rendering of the erroneous sentence!

The focus of the research is on the common errors found in the STs and how the translators deal with them, and not on other errors that might be committed by the translators themselves in rendering other parts of the sentences which are in the first place not erroneous.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

After explaining the errors found in the selected English sentences, according to Hancock (2001), which comprise the corpus of the study, simple tables were designed to include the data. Each table shows the 14 human translators (HT1-HT14) together with the 3 machine translators MT Google, MT Bing, and MT SYSTRAN, their translations, the corrections made, or not, by human translators, through putting (+) or (-) signs, and the human translators' comments, if any, through putting (+) or (-) signs as well. Under the correction column, in case the translators skip translating the erroneous parts of the sentences, an asterisk sign (*) is put, and in case of having an erroneous rendering, double asterisk sign (**) is put. Under the comment column, when having an irrelevant comment, triple asterisk sign (***) is put. For space limitations, 14 sentences only are discussed in detail.

ST (1): "It was interesting to have class discussions with other strangers"

Figure 1. Caricature for *strangers*, by Hancock (2001)**Error Explanation:**

When we talk about *strangers*, it means those people we have never met before. As evident in the sentence, with the presence of the word “class”, the context of the sentence refers to a situation that happens in school or university. If we want to talk about individuals of other nationalities, we have to use the word “foreigners”. However, the latter often has negative connotations, so it’s better to use the phrase “people from other countries”. (Hancock, 2001)

TABLE 1
ANALYSIS OF ST1 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	كانت نقاشاتي الصفية مع الغرباء ممتعة	-	-
HT 2	كان ممتعاً أن نخوض في نقاشات صفية مع بعض الغرباء	-	-
HT 3	إنه من الممتع أن نتناقش داخل الصف مع الأجانب الآخرين	+	-
HT 4	من الممتع أن يكون لدينا نقاشات صفية مع أجانب آخرين	+	-
HT 5	من الممتع أن تتم مناقشات في الصف مع أناس غرباء آخرين	-	-
HT 6	كان أمراً ممتعاً تناول مناقشات صفية مع غرباء آخرين	-	-
HT 7	كان من الممتع أن أخذ حصة نقاشية مع الطلبة الأجانب الآخرين	+	-
HT 8	من الممتع أن تحضر مناقشات مع الآخرين	*	-
HT 9	كان من المثير للدهشة أن يكون هناك مناقشات مع غرباء آخرين	-	-
HT 10	كان من الممتع الذهاب إلى صف نقاشي مع غرباء	-	-
HT 11	كان مثيراً للاهتمام أن تجري مناقشات صفية مع غرباء آخرين	-	-
HT 12	كان من المهم أن نقوم بنقاشات صفية مع بقية الطلاب	*	-
HT 13	كان من الممتع أن تدور النقاشات الصفية مع الآخرين	*	-
HT 14	كان ممتعاً أن نحظى بنقاشات صفية مع آخرين غرباء	-	-
MT Google	كان من الممتع إجراء مناقشات في الفصل مع غرباء آخرين	-	N/A
MT Bing	كان من المثير للاهتمام إجراء مناقشات صفية مع غرباء آخرين	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	كان مثيراً للاهتمام أن نعقد مناقشات جماعية مع غرباء آخرين	-	N/A

Discussion:

It is evident that HT3, HT4, and HT7 are aware of the error as they translate the word “strangers” into “أجانب”. As for HT8, HT12, and HT13, it seems that they are in doubt of the word, so they skip it in their translations. The rest of the translators render the word “strangers” into “غرباء”, which shows that they are unaware of the error. No comments are left by the human translators.

ST (2): “The streets between Oxford and Bath are beautiful!”

Error Explanation:

According to Hancock (2001), we can find “streets” in villages and towns, having houses on them. As for “roads”, they connect towns.

TABLE 2
ANALYSIS OF ST2 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	الشوارع بين أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	-
HT 2	الشوارع جميلة بين أكسفورد وبات	-	-
HT 3	الشوارع بين مدينتي أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	-
HT 4	إن الشوارع مابين جامعة أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	-
HT 5	تعد الشوارع بين أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	-
HT 6	إن الشوارع بين أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	-
HT 7	جميلة هي الشوارع بين أكسفورد وبات	-	-
HT 8	تكون الشوارع ما بين أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	-
HT 9	الشوارع بين أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	-
HT 10	الشوارع بين أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	-
HT 11	تعتبر الشوارع بين مدينتي أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	-
HT 12	شوارع جميلة تلك الواقعة بين مدينتي أكسفورد وبات	-	-
HT 13	إن الطرق بين جامعتي أكسفورد وبات جميلة	+	-
HT 14	إن الشوارع بين جامعة أكسفورد وجامعة بات جميلة	-	-
MT Google	الشوارع بين أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	N/A
MT Bing	الشوارع بين أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	الشوارع بين أكسفورد وبات جميلة	-	N/A

Discussion:

HT13 alone is aware of the error as he translates the word “streets” into “الطرق”. The rest of the translators render the word “streets” into “الشوارع”, which shows that they are unaware of the error. No comments are left by the human translators.

ST (3): “I love going for walks in nature”

Error Explanation:

Hancock (2001) mentions that when we talk about “nature” we mostly mean the world of animals and plants, which biologists are concerned with in their studies. If one likes to have walks in the green fields among the trees, the word “country” is to be used and not “nature”.

TABLE 3
ANALYSIS OF ST3 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	أحب التجول في الطبيعة سيرا على الأقدام	-	-
HT 2	أحب المشي في الطبيعة	-	-
HT 3	أحب المشي في الهواء الطلق	**	***
HT 4	أحب المشي في الطبيعة	-	-
HT 5	أحب الذهاب للمشي في الطبيعة	-	-
HT 6	أحب الذهاب للسير في الطبيعة	-	***
HT 7	أحب المشي في الهواء الطلق	**	-
HT 8	أحب المشي لمسافات في الطبيعة	-	***
HT 9	أحب السير متأملا الطبيعة	-	-
HT 10	أحب الذهاب في نزهة في الطبيعة	-	-
HT 11	أحب الذهاب في نزهات في الطبيعة	-	-
HT 12	أحب السير في الطبيعة	-	-
HT 13	أحب أن أذهب للمشي في الطبيعة	-	-
HT 14	أحب المشي في الطبيعة	-	-
MT Google	أحب الذهاب للتنزه في الطبيعة	-	N/A
MT Bing	أحب الذهاب للمشي في الطبيعة	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	أحب ان امشي في الطبيعة	-	N/A

Discussion:

It is evident that, apart from HT3 and HT7, no one of the translators is aware of the error, as they translate the word “nature” into “الطبيعة”. However, this rendering can convey the meaning of the sentence in the Arabic TL since the word “الطبيعة” can refer to green fields, trees, etc. As for HT3 and HT7, they mistranslate the word “nature” into “الهواء الطلق”.

Regarding the comments, HT3 irrelevantly comments on the sentence saying that: “walk should be walking because it is preceded by for”, HT6 irrelevantly comments leaving a question that says: “Can we make walk plural?”, and HT8 irrelevantly comments saying: “I translated the word walks into المشي لمسافات to express the (s) in walks, because it has no plural”.

ST (4): “There are some nice pictures in my class”

Figure 2. Caricature for *pictures in my class*, by Hancock (2001)**Error Explanation:**

Hancock (2001) writes that when we talk about a group of people who are learning, we use the word “class”, while when we talk about the place where they learn, we use the word “classroom”.

TABLE 4
ANALYSIS OF ST4 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	Tts	Correction	Comment
HT 1	على جدران قاعتي الدراسية بعض من الصور الجميلة	+	-
HT 2	توجد بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 3	يوجد بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 4	توجد بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 5	كان هناك بعضاً من الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 6	هناك بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 7	هناك بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 8	توجد بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 9	هناك بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 10	هناك بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 11	يوجد بعض اللوحات الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 12	يوجد هناك بعض من الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
HT 13	هناك بعض الصور اللطيفة في صفي	-	-
HT 14	هناك بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	-
MT Google	هناك بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	N/A
MT Bing	هناك بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	هناك بعض الصور الجميلة في صفي	-	N/A

Discussion:

It is evident that only HT1 is aware of the error as he translates “in my class” into “على جدران قاعتي الدراسية”. The rest of the translators render the word “class” into “صف”, which shows that they are unaware of the error. No comments are left by the human translators.

ST (5): “I work like a waitress on Fridays”



Figure 3. Caricature for *like a waitress*, by Hancock (2001)

Error Explanation:

Hancock (2001) states that the word “like” in this sentence means “similar”. This means that the job of the person talking is not really a waitress, but similar to a waitress. Hancock (2001) adds that we have to use “as” if we want to tell others about our position at work.

TABLE 5
ANALYSIS OF ST5 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	أعمل كالتنادلة في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 2	أعمل كالخادمة في يوم الجمعة	-	-
HT 3	أعمل كتنادلة أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 4	أعمل كتنادلة في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 5	أنا أشتغل كالتنادلة في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 6	أعمل كتنادلة في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 7	أعمل نادلاً في أيام الجمعة	+	-
HT 8	أعمل مثل التنادل في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 9	أعمل كالمنتظر في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 10	أعمل كتنادل في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 11	أعمل كتنادلة في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 12	أعمل كتنادل في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 13	أعمل كتنادلة في أيام الجمعة	-	-
HT 14	أعمل كتنادلة في أيام الجمعة	-	-
MT Google	أعمل نادلة يوم الجمعة	+	N/A
MT Bing	أعمل مثل نادلة يوم الجمعة	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	أعمل كتنادلة في أيام الجمعة	-	N/A

Discussion:

It is evident that only HT7 and MT Google are aware of the error as they translate “I work like a waitress” into “أعمل نادلاً” and “أعمل نادلة” respectively. The rest of the translators use “ك” and “مثل” in their renderings, which denote similarity. However, HT9 mistranslates the word “waitress” into “المنتظر”. No comments are left by the human translators.

ST (6): “I work in the personal department”

Error Explanation:

Hancock (2001) differentiates between the word “personal”, which refers to things connected to one’s private life and the word “personnel”, which refers to the department at work that assists individuals. The two words have, for sure, slightly different spellings, yet somewhat confusing pronunciations.

TABLE 6
ANALYSIS OF ST6 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	أعمل في قسم شؤون الأفراد	+	-
HT 2	أعمل في قسم الذاتية	+	-
HT 3	أنا أعمل في قطاع خاص	**	-
HT 4	أعمل في القسم الشخصي	-	-
HT 5	أعمل في قسم شخصي	-	-
HT 6	أعمل لحساب القطاع الشخصي	-	-
HT 7	أعمل في قسم خاص	**	-
HT 8	أعمل حارس شخصي	**	-
HT 9	أعمل في القسم الشخصي	-	-
HT 10	العمل في القسم الخاص	**	-
HT 11	أعمل في قسم شؤون الموظفين	+	-
HT 12	أعمل لدى القسم الشخصي	-	-
HT 13	أعمل في القسم الشخصي	-	-
HT 14	أعمل في قسم الأفراد	+	-
MT Google	أعمل في قسم الشؤون الشخصية	-	N/A
MT Bing	أنا أعمل في القسم الشخصي	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	أنا أعمل في قسم الشؤون الشخصية	-	N/A

Discussion:

It is evident that HT1, HT2, HT11, and HT14 are aware of the error as they translate the phrase “personal department” into “قسم شؤون الأفراد”, “قسم الذاتية”, “قسم شؤون الموظفين”, and “قسم الأفراد” respectively. As for HT3, HT7, HT8, and HT10, they mistranslate it into “قطاع خاص”, “قسم خاص”, “حارس شخصي”, and “قسم خاص” respectively. The rest of the translators are unaware of this error as they render the word “personal” into “شخصي / شخصية”. No comments are left by the human translators.

ST (7): “My father was very strong with us as children”

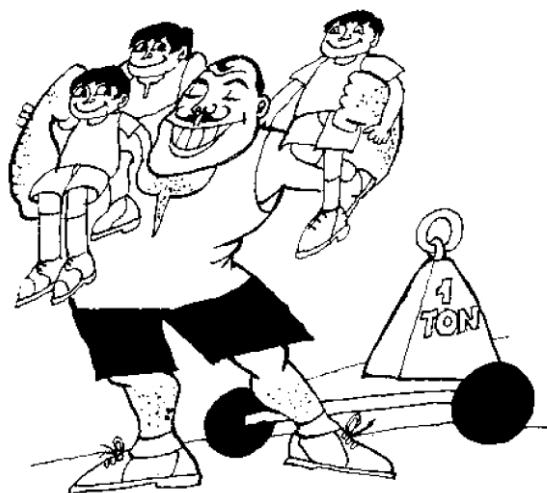


Figure 4. Caricature for *very strong with us*, by Hancock (2001)

Error Explanation:

Hancock (2001) writes that when we talk about the physical characteristics of a person, we use the word “strong”, while when talking about a person who makes children obey orders, the word “strict” has to be used.

TABLE 7
ANALYSIS OF ST7 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	كان أبي قاسياً معنا عندما كنا أطفالاً	+	-
HT 2	كان والدي شديداً جداً معنا عندما كنا أطفالاً	+	-
HT 3	كان أبي قاسياً جداً معنا عندما كنا صغاراً	+	-
HT 4	كان والدي قوياً جداً عندما كنا أطفالاً	-	-
HT 5	كان والدي قاسياً جداً معنا عندما كنا صغاراً	+	-
HT 6	كان أبي صارماً جداً في التعامل معنا مثل الأطفال	+	-
HT 7	كان أبي شديد القسوة معنا عندما كنا صغاراً	+	-
HT 8	كان والدي شديداً جداً معنا عندما كنا صغاراً	+	-
HT 9	كان أبي صارماً جداً معنا عندما كنا صغاراً	+	-
HT 10	كان والدي شديداً معنا عندما كنا أطفال	+	-
HT 11	كان والدي قاسياً معنا عندما كنا أطفالاً	+	-
HT 12	والذي كان حازماً جداً معنا كأطفال	+	-
HT 13	كان والدي صارماً جداً معنا كأطفال	+	-
HT 14	كان والدي صارماً جداً معنا حيث كنا أطفالاً	+	-
MT Google	كان والدي قوياً جداً معنا كأطفال	-	N/A
MT Bing	كان والدي قوياً جداً معنا كأطفال	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	كان أبي قوياً جداً معنا كأولاد	-	N/A

Discussion:

Being aware of the error, the majority of the translators are successful in rendering the word “strong” into different TL words such as “قاسياً”، “شديداً”، “صارماً”، “حازماً”، etc. HT4 and the MTs are unaware of the error as they translate the word “strong” into “قوياً”. No comments are left by the human translators.

ST (8): “I really love the French kitchen”



Figure 5. Caricature for *French kitchen*, by Hancock (2001)

Error Explanation:

Hancock (2001) mentions that the word “kitchen” refers to the place or room where one cooks food, not to the food itself. He adds that although the phrase “French cuisine” can be used, yet it is more usual to use “French food” instead.

TABLE 8
ANALYSIS OF ST8 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	أحب المطبخ الفرنسي	-	-
HT 2	أنا حقاً أحب المطبخ الفرنسي	-	-
HT 3	أنا فعلاً أحب الطعام الفرنسي	+	-
HT 4	أحب المطبخ الفرنسي حقاً	-	-
HT 5	أنا حقاً أحب المطبخ الفرنسي	-	+
HT 6	في الحقيقة ، أحب المطبخ الفرنسي	-	-
HT 7	أحب الطعام الفرنسي حقاً	+	-
HT 8	أنا فعلاً أحب المطبخ الفرنسي	-	+
HT 9	إنني أحب الدجاج الفرنسي حقاً	**	-
HT 10	أنا أحب المطبخ الفرنسي حقاً	-	-
HT 11	أحب فعلاً المطبخ الفرنسي	-	-
HT 12	أنا حقاً أحب الدجاج الفرنسي	**	-
HT 13	أحب المطبخ الفرنسي حقاً	-	-
HT 14	إنني حقاً أحب المطبخ الفرنسي	-	-
MT Google	أحب المطبخ الفرنسي حقاً	-	N/A
MT Bing	أنا حقاً أحب المطبخ الفرنسي	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	أحب المطبخ الفرنسي حقاً	-	N/A

Discussion:

HT3 and HT7 are aware of the error as they translate the phrase “French kitchen” into “الطعام الفرنسي”. The rest of the translators are unaware of the error as they use the word “المطبخ” as a rendering for “kitchen”. HT9 and HT12 mistranslate the word “kitchen” into “الدجاج”, i.e. chicken. Regarding comments, HT5 comments on the sentence saying that what is meant is the “French food”. As for HT8, he only underlines the word kitchen. ST (9): “Delicious! This is my favorite plate!”



Figure 6. Caricature for *favorite plate*, by Hancock (2001)

Error Explanation:

Hancock (2001) states that the word “plate” refers to the thing one puts their food in. As for the case when we want to refer to the way food is cooked, the word “dish” is to be used. The following table shows the human vs. machine renderings:

TABLE 9
ANALYSIS OF ST9 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	إنه لذيذ ! هذا طريقي المفضل	-	-
HT 2	لذيذ ! هذا طريقي المفضل !	-	-
HT 3	لذيذ ! إنه طريقي المفضل	-	-
HT 4	إنه لذيذ ! هذه أكلتي المفضلة	+	-
HT 5	لذيذ ! هذا هو طريقي المفضل !	-	-
HT 6	لذيذ ! هذا هو طريقي المفضل	-	-
HT 7	لذيذ ! إنه طريقي المفضل !	-	-
HT 8	إنه لذيذ ! هذا هو طريقي المفضل !	-	-
HT 9	هذا هو طريقي المفضل إنه لذيذ !	-	-
HT 10	لذيذ ! هذا هو طريقي المفضل	-	-
HT 11	لذيذ ! هذا طريقي المفضل !	-	-
HT 12	إنه لذيذ! هذا هو طريقي المفضل	-	-
HT 13	لذيذ ! إنه طريقي المفضل !	-	-
HT 14	لذيذ ! إنه طريقي المفضل !	-	-
MT Google	لذيذ! هذا هو طبق المفضل لدي !	-	N/A
MT Bing	لذيذ! هذه هي طريقي المفضل !	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	لذيذ! هذا هو لوحتي المفضلة !	**	N/A

Discussion:

Almost all the translators render the word “plate” into “طبق”, which gives the sense that they are unaware of the error. However, the word “طبق” in Arabic might refer to food. HT4 is aware of the error as he renders the phrase “my favorite plate” into “أكلتي المفضلة”. MT SYSTRAN mistranslates the word “plate” into “لوحتي”. No comments are left by the human translators.

ST (10): “Would you like some desert?”

Error Explanation:

Hancock (2001) differentiates between the word “desert” which refers to the place that is all sand, for instance the “Sahara Desert”, and the word “dessert” which refers to the sweets that people eat after meals. The two words certainly have slightly different spellings, yet somewhat confusing pronunciations.

TABLE 10
ANALYSIS OF ST10 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	أتريد بعضاً من الحلوى ؟	+	-
HT 2	هل ترغب ببعض من الحلوى	+	-
HT 3	هل ترغب في بعض الحلوى ؟	+	***
HT 4	أتريد بعض الحلوى ؟	+	-
HT 5	هل ترغب ببعض أطباق الحلوى ؟	+	-
HT 6	هل تود زيارة بعض الصحاري	**	-
HT 7	هل ترغب ببعض من الحلوى	+	-
HT 8	أتحب الصحراء ؟	**	+
HT 9	أتحب زيارة الصحراء	**	-
HT 10	هل ترغب في بعض التحلية	+	-
HT 11	هل ترغب بتناول بعض الحلوى ؟	+	-
HT 12	هل ترغب ببعض الحلوى ؟	+	-
HT 13	أتريد بعض التحلية ؟	+	-
HT 14	هل ترغب ببعض الحلوى ؟	+	-
MT Google	هل تريد بعض الصحراء ؟	-	N/A
MT Bing	هل تريد بعض الصحراء ؟	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	هل ترغب في بعض الصحراء ؟	-	N/A

Discussion:

The table shows that 11 human translators render the word “desert” into “حلوى” or “تحلية”, which indicates that they are aware of the error in this sentence. It seems that translators HT6, HT8, and HT9 have some doubts with regard to having the word “desert” in this sentence, thus they manage to give translations that are as a result erroneous ones and do not convey the intended meaning of the sentence. The three MTs render this sentence literally giving no sense in the TL. With regard to comments, HT3 states that the word “desert” has to be “deserts” because it is preceded by *some*. HT8 only underlines the word “desert”.

ST (11): “When my mother went to work, my aunt cared about us”

Error Explanation:

According to Hancock (2001), when we use the phrasal verb “care about” someone, it means that we have “feelings” towards them. However, when this care takes the form of “physical” responsibility, we have to use the phrasal verb “take care of” instead.

TABLE 11
ANALYSIS OF ST11 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	كانت خالتي تعنتني بنا وقت ذهاب أمي إلى العمل	+	-
HT 2	عندما كانت أمي تذهب إلى العمل ، كانت عمتي تعنتني بنا	+	-
HT 3	اعتنت عمتي بنا عندما ذهبت والدتي إلى العمل	+	-
HT 4	اهتمت عمتي بنا عندما ذهبت أمي إلى العمل	-	-
HT 5	تعني عمتي / خالتي بنا عندما تذهب والدتي للعمل	+	-
HT 6	عندما ذهبت أمي للعمل ، قامت خالتي بالاعتناء بنا	+	-
HT 7	اعتنت بنا خالتي ، عندما ذهبت والدتي إلى العمل	+	-
HT 8	إهتمت بنا خالتنا ، عندما ذهبت والدتي للعمل	-	+
HT 9	كانت عمتي تعنتني بنا ، عندما ذهبت أمي إلى العمل	+	-
HT 10	عندما تذهب أمي للعمل ، عمتي تعنتني بنا	+	-
HT 11	كانت عمتي تعنتني بنا عندما كانت والدتي تذهب إلى العمل	+	-
HT 12	بذهاب أمي للعمل ، تتكفل عمتي / خالتي بالاعتناء بنا	+	-
HT 13	عندما ذهبت أمي إلى العمل ، اهتمت خالتي برعايتنا	+	-
HT 14	عندما ذهبت والدتي إلى العمل ، اعتنت عمتي بنا	+	-
MT Google	عندما ذهبت والدتي إلى العمل ، كانت عمتي تهتم بنا	-	N/A
MT Bing	عندما ذهبت أمي إلى العمل ، اهتمت عمتي بنا	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	عندما ذهبت أمي إلى العمل ، كانت خالتي تهتم بنا	-	N/A

Discussion:

The majority of the human translators are aware of the error in this sentence as they render the phrase “care about” into “تعنتني” and other derivations of “تعنتني” with similar meanings. HT13 renders the phrase into “اهتمت برعايتنا”, which also indicates physical responsibility. HT4, HT8 and the three MTs render the phrase into “اهتمت / تهتم”. As for comments, HT8 only underlines the word “cared”.

ST (12): “I watched a car accident yesterday”.

Error Explanation:

According to Hancock (2001), we might “see” something accidentally, i.e., even if we do not intend to do so, however, we can pay attention and “watch” something for some time, deliberately.

TABLE 12
ANALYSIS OF ST12 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	شاهدت حادثاً مرورياً البارحة	-	-
HT 2	رأيت البارحة حادث اصطدام السيارة	+	-
HT 3	شاهدت حادث سيارة البارحة	-	-
HT 4	رأيت حادث سيارة البارحة	+	-
HT 5	شاهدت الأمس حادث سيارة	-	-
HT 6	شاهدت حادث سيارة البارحة	-	-
HT 7	شاهدت حادث سيارة يوم أمس	-	-
HT 8	بالأمس شاهدت حادث سيارة	-	-
HT 9	رأيت حادث سيارة أمس	+	-
HT 10	شاهدت حادث سيارة يوم أمس	-	-
HT 11	شاهدت حادث سيارة البارحة	-	-
HT 12	شاهدت حادث سير ليلة البارحة	-	-
HT 13	شاهدت حادثاً مرورياً أمس	-	-
HT 14	رأيت حادث سيارة البارحة	+	-
MT Google	شاهدت حادث سيارة أمس	-	N/A
MT Bing	شاهدت حادث سيارة أمس	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	شاهدت حادث سيارة البارحة	-	N/A

Discussion:

The table shows that HT2, HT4, HT9, and HT14 are aware of the error as they render the word “watched” into “رأيت”. The rest of the translators render the word into “شاهدت”, which indicates that they are unaware of the error. No comments are left by the human translators.

ST (13): “Peter reminded me of the chicken in the oven”

Figure 7. Caricature for *remind of*, by Hancock (2001)

Error Explanation:

Hancock (2001) mentions that using the phrase “remind of” refers to the case of having a similarity, however, when we want to remind someone not to forget something, we have to use “remind about” instead.

TABLE 13
ANALYSIS OF ST13 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	ذكرني بيتر بالدجاج داخل الفرن	-	-
HT 2	ذكرني بيتر بأن الدجاجة في الفرن	+	-
HT 3	ذكرني بيتر بشأن الدجاجة التي في الفرن	+	-
HT 4	ذكرني بيتر أن الدجاجة في الفرن	+	-
HT 5	ذكرني بيتر بالدجاجة التي كانت في الفرن	-	-
HT 6	ذكرني بيتر بالدجاجة في الفرن	-	-
HT 7	ذكرني بيتر بأن لا أنسى الدجاجة في الفرن	+	-
HT 8	دعاني بيتر على وجبة دجاج مشوي	**	-
HT 9	ذكرني بيتر بأمر الدجاجة التي في الفرن	+	-
HT 10	ذكرني بيتر بالدجاجة التي في الفرن	-	-
HT 11	ذكرني بيتر بوجود الدجاج في الفرن	+	***
HT 12	نبهني بيتر بوجود الدجاج في الفرن	+	-
HT 13	ذكرني بيتر في الدجاجة التي في الفرن	-	-
HT 14	ذكرني بيتر بالدجاجة التي في الفرن	-	-
MT Google	ذكرني بطرس بالدجاج في الفرن	-	N/A
MT Bing	ذكرني بطرس بالدجاج في الفرن	-	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	ذكرني بطرس بالدجاجة في الفرن	-	N/A

Discussion:

The table shows that HT2, HT3, HT4, HT7, HT9, HT11, and HT12 are all aware of the error as they render the phrase “reminded me of” into “ذكرني بأن”، “ذكرني بشأن”، “ذكرني أن”، “ذكرني بأن لا أنسى”، “ذكرني بأمر”، “ذكرني بوجود”، and “نبهني بوجود” respectively. HT8 mistranslates the sentence. As for HT1, HT5, HT6, HT10, HT13, HT14, and the three MTs, they are all unaware of the error. Regarding comments, HT11 irrelevantly states that the verb “remind” means something in the past and he wonders whether it can be used here.

ST (14): “Two people were wounded in the traffic accident”

Error Explanation:

Hancock (2001) argues that one could be “wounded” in a war, by guns for instance, or in a fight, by knives, etc. The word “injured” is used to refer to the case where people’s bodies are damaged, for instance in accidents.

TABLE 14
ANALYSIS OF S14 TRANSLATIONS

Translators	TTs	Correction	Comment
HT 1	جرح شخصان في الحادث المروري	-	-
HT 2	جرح شخصان في حادث السير	-	-
HT 3	جرح شخصان في حادث مروري	-	-
HT 4	جرح شخصين في حادث مروري	-	-
HT 5	تم إصابة شخصان بجروح في حادث مروري	-	-
HT 6	جرح شخصين في حادثة تقاطع السير	-	-
HT 7	أصيب شخصان بجروح في حادث سير	-	-
HT 8	حصيلة الحادث المروري كان جرح اثنين من الناس	-	-
HT 9	جرح شخصين في حادث سير	-	-
HT 10	أصيب اثنان من الناس في حادث مروري	+	-
HT 11	أصيب شخصان بجروح في حادث سير	-	-
HT 12	جرح شخصين في الحادث المروري	-	-
HT 13	جرح شخصان في الحادث المروري	-	-
HT 14	جرح شخصان في حادث السير	-	-
MT Google	جرح شخصان في حادث مروري	-	N/A
MT Bing	أصيب شخصان في حادث مروري	+	N/A
MT SYSTRAN	أصيب شخصان في حادث السير	+	N/A

Discussion:

Taking into account that “الإصابة” is a general term and “الجرح” is a specific one in Arabic when talking about injuries, the table shows that HT10, MT Bing, and MT SYSTRAN are aware of the error as they render the phrase “were wounded” into “أصيب”. The rest of the translators render the word into “جرح” or “أصيب بجروح”. No one of the human translators comments on this sentence.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having analyzed the Arabic translations of 40 English sentences that contain common errors, by 14 MA students of translation vs. 3 machine translators, the following results are found:

1-Out of a total of 680 translations done by human and machine translators, 309 ones were done after correcting the errors, 336 passed uncorrected, 7 translations were done with the erroneous part of the sentence skipped, and 28 translations were erroneous. The following table reveals that about half of the translations reflect unawareness of common errors on the part of human and machine translators, thus regarded as erroneous translations.

TABLE 15
UNAWARENESS RATE OF HUMAN & MACHINE TRANSLATORS

Reaction	Frequency
Correction	309
No Correction	336
Erroneous Rendering	28
Skipping	7
Total	680

The table is graphically represented as follows:

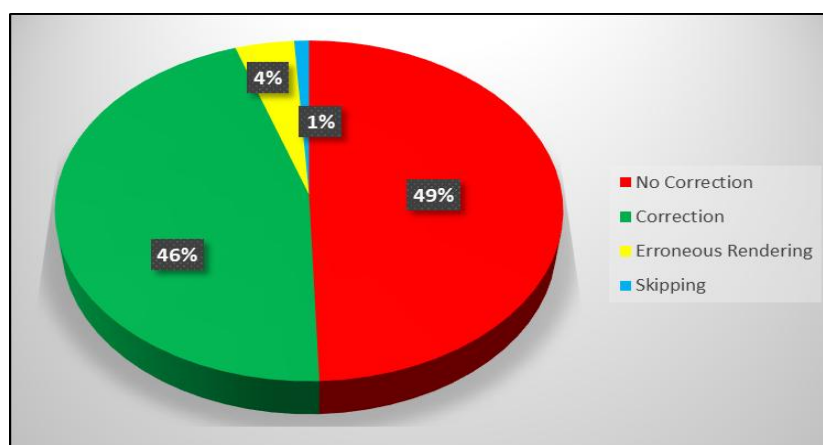


Figure 8. Unawareness of Common Errors (HT + MT)

2-Checking the translations done by human translators only, it is found that out of a total of 560 translations, 241 ones passed without correction. The table reveals that about half of the translations only were done having the errors

corrected. More than 40% of the translations were done without correcting the errors found in the STs, resulting in erroneous translations.

TABLE 16
UNWARENESS RATE OF HUMAN TRANSLATORS

Reaction	Frequency
Correction	285
No Correction	241
Erroneous Rendering	27
Skipping	7
Total	560

The table is graphically represented as follows:

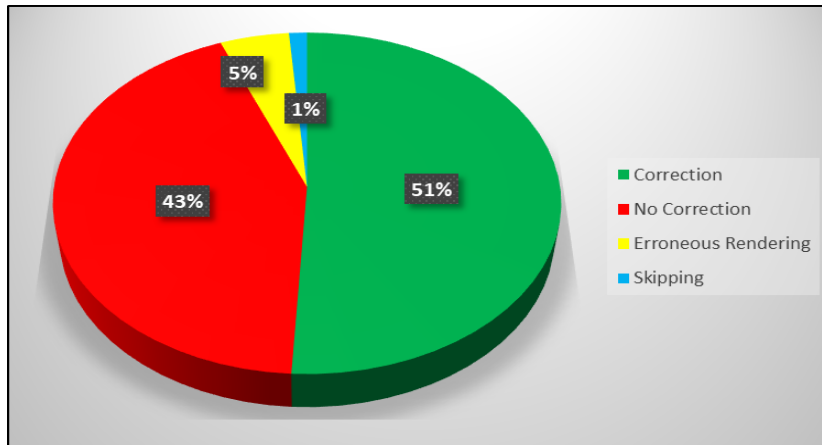


Figure 9. Unawareness of Common Errors (HT)

3-As for the translations done by machine translators, it is found that out of a total of 120 translations, 95 ones undergone no correction, with a percentage of 79% of erroneous translations. Generally speaking, the three MTs under study recorded high rates of unawareness of common errors. The following table shows that Google Translate and SYSTRAN have the same unawareness rate. However, both have better performance compared to Bing Microsoft Translator.

TABLE 17
UNWARENESS RATE OF MACHINE TRANSLATORS

MT	Frequency		
	Correction	No Correction	Erroneous Rendering
Google Translate	10	30	0
Bing Microsoft Translator	4	36	0
SYSTRAN	10	29	1
Total	24	95	1

The table is graphically represented as follows:

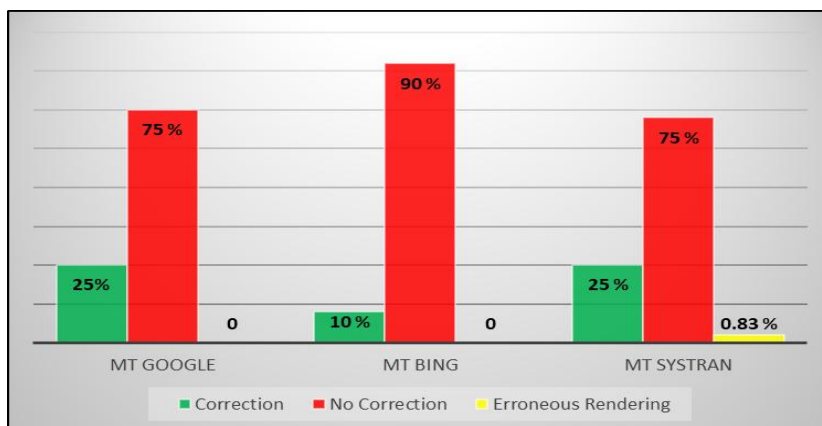


Figure 10. Unawareness of Common Errors (MT)

4-The statistics in (2) and (3) above indicate that human translators are better than machine translators in detecting errors and correcting them in translation.

5- With regard to commenting on the possibility of having errors in the 40 STs, by the 14 human translators, only 26 comments were recorded, 10 of which were irrelevant. The following table shows the number of comments by the human translators:

TABLE 18
FREQUENCY OF COMMENTING

Reaction	Frequency
Comments	16
No Comments	534
Irrelevant Comments	10
Total	560

The table is graphically represented as follows:

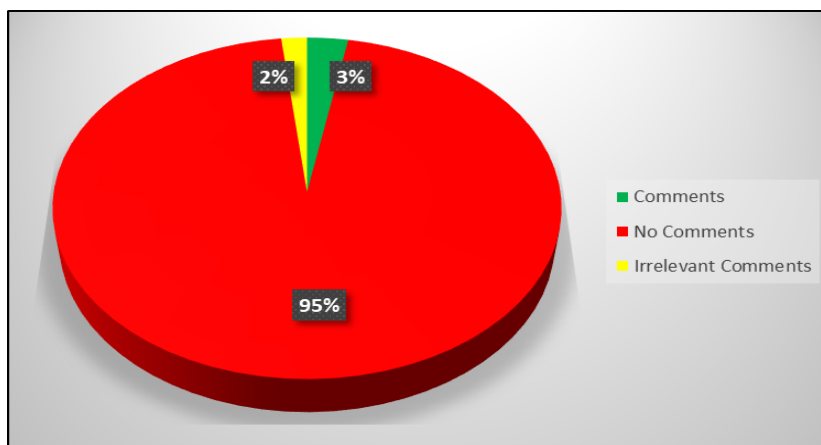


Figure 11. Commenting on Errors

Despite that the analysis reveals that there is a correction rate of 51% by human translators, see table 16, yet not all correction cases were accompanied by comments. This is evident in table 18, which shows that the rate of not commenting on errors was 95%. This could be ascribed either to the preference by the human translators to correct the errors within the process of translation without feeling the need to record the comments, thus translating the STs directly, or to the case of not being aware that errors exist in the STs in the first place.

6-Regarding the 7 cases where human translators skipped translating the erroneous parts of the ST sentences, which constitute a percentage of 1%, this could be justified as having the human translators in doubt of the erroneous parts of the sentences that they are engaged in translating and not knowing how to deal with them.

7-As for the 28 cases of erroneous renderings, 27 of them were done by the human translators and 1 by SYSTRAN. This could be ascribed to lack of experience on the part of human translators, away from the issue of common errors. The analysis reveals that machine translators are more exposed than human translators to retain the common errors found in the ST. This is due to the nature of errors themselves that tend to be found on the lexical level, together with the MT rather literal tendency in translation.

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