Problems Encountered by MA Translation Students at Arab Universities

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Abstract

This paper addresses the major problems and difficulties encountered by the MA students of translation at Petra University, Jordan, and Damascus University, Syria. It focuses on their linguistic errors and cultural mismatch cases in translating from Arabic into English. One major aim is to reveal which aspect of deviation is more problematic: the linguistic errors or cultural mismatch cases. These errors are classified into linguistic deviations and cultural discrepancies. The linguistic errors embrace the syntactic and morphological aspects of language, on the one hand, and the semantic features of word choice and collocation, on the other. The cultural mismatch cases reflect two different sets of social values in the native speakers of Arabic and English. Both the linguistic errors and the cultural mismatch cases, however, are likely to induce pragmatic failure in understanding the English target text, but at different degrees. Finally, the learners’ errors and/or mismatch cases are evaluated in terms of frequency and degree of causing pragmatic failure, and solutions are suggested.

Key Words: MA students, Arabic-English mistranslation, grammatical errors, semantic inappropriateness, cultural mismatch, pragmatic failure.