

## **Tautology and Translation**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to examine the translatability of Arabic tautological expressions into English and to address the pragmatic, linguistic and cultural problems that may face the translator and lead to the distortion of the message conveyed. The material of the study consists of twenty five tautological expressions identified by the researcher as involving difficulties to translators. These tautological utterances were selected from books, periodicals, publications, and the spoken language. Fifteen M.A students enrolled in the translation program at Yarmouk University and thirty majors (3<sup>rd</sup> year) who were then having a course in translation volunteered to be subjects of the study. They were asked to give their own translation of the given Arabic tautological expressions. The researcher identified the failures into three main categories; pragmatic, linguistic and cultural. Many issues were discussed under each category so as to investigate the cause of failure in rendering these utterances appropriately. The main finding of the study was the obvious indication that the students' lack of competence and knowledge in pragmatics, linguistics, and culture of both source language and the target language led to the distortion of the message as most of the students opted for literal translations.

**Keywords:** Tautology, Maxim of Quantity (MQ), Notion of Implicature (NI), Cooperative Principle (CP)

## **1. Introduction**

Translation is the process of rendering a text from source language ( S L ) into a target language ( T L ). This process helps people speaking different languages and having different cultures to communicate with each other. So, the role of the translator is to look for an equivalence in the T L for the texts translated from S L. In fact, the work of the translator is not easy since he encounters different types of problems some of which are attributed to language. Therefore, it is of great importance to highlight the problematic areas that may face the translator and help him by facilitating his job through trying to overcome these obstacles.

One of these problematic areas that may lead to the distortion of the message is Arabic Tautological expressions. Arabic Tautological expressions have been a neglected area in Arabic despite the fact that they are an important phenomenon in our daily spoken language. Therefore, the researcher intends to shed light on this topic in an attempt to highlight linguistic, cultural and pragmatic problems that create vagueness in the assimilation of their meanings in the T L.

### **1.1 Objectives of the study**

This study aims to examine Arabic Tautological expressions and the translation of these expressions into English. It is an attempt to highlight the difficulties that face translators in rendering them into English. The new standard dictionary ( 1988 ) defines tautology as “ that form of pleonasm in which the same word or idea is unnecessarily repeated”. The new Webster (1980) defines Tautology as “ A useless repetition of the same idea or meaning in different words”. However, such definitions are insufficient because Tautological expressions may consist of two constituents’  $p \rightarrow p$ , but the second P is pragmatically loaded. in this spirit, Ward and Hirschburg (1992) defined Tautological utterances as “ those utterances whose semantic representations represent formal tautologies i.e, valid statements in propositional logic”. Grice (1995) defines language use as “ A cognitive act aiming at achieving cooperation between both the speaker and the listener”.

The researcher will try to identify lexical, grammatical and cultural errors in translating Arabic Tautological expressions committed by M.A students of translation and junior English majors. Then, he will classify them into categories, finding out their frequencies. Then he will try to determine the degree of acceptability of these errors and the extent to which they violate and distort the message conveyed. This study also aims at finding out the degree of agreement on the acceptability of the students’ translations.

### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The study is meant to examine and analyze Arabic Tautological expressions from a translational perspective by investigating the linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic problems which translators may encounter in this area. In fact, in addition to working competence in the S L and T L, translating Arabic Tautological expressions into English requires an adequate cultural and pragmatic competence on the part of the translator, by way of illustration, consider the translatability of (1) and (2) below which were quoted from Farghal (1992):

1- il - bint bint                      “ Girls are Girls”

Def – girl girl  
2- il – bānāt bānāt “ A girl is a girl”

Def – girls girls  
The translator's awareness of the pragmatic imports of (1) and (2) is the key to advancing appropriate renderings for them into English. The translator should be aware of the fact that (1) is a tolerance tautology while (2) is a generalization tautology.

Further consider (3) below:

3 - badduh imūt bi – mūt

As can be seen, the concept of predestination figures heavily in (3). By contrast, there is no such fatalistic belief in English which makes it difficult for translators to find its English functional equivalence. However, English possesses deterministic tautologies calling for forgetting things belonging to the past, observe the English equivalence for the following Arabic deterministic tautology in (4) below;

4 - itha – māt māt “ if he died, he died”.  
iḏa die die

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

The researcher intends to shed light on the translatability of Arabic tautological expressions for the following reasons: First, to classify tautological expressions according to their parts of speech and functions in order to help the translator give the equivalence in other languages. Second, to contribute to an area lacking in studies that relate to this subject. Third, to clarify different context since they are context – dependent in Arabic. Fifth, to help professors utilize suitable remedial work to aid their students in translating tautological expressions. Sixth, to examine the relationship between tautology and other concepts such as cooperative principle (CP), the politeness principle (PP), the maxim of quality (MQ), and the notion of implicature (NI). Seventh, to identify the problems in translating tautological expressions through a test conducted for MA students of translation and English majors who have done at least one course in translation at Yarmouk University. Then, the study will suggest solutions to these problems.

### **1.4 Hypotheses of the study**

This study will test the following hypotheses: First, translators may make mistakes in grammar, meaning or vocabulary when translating such expressions. Second, emphases on meaning are very important in any analysis of structure. Third, sometimes the distortion of the message in translating these expressions results from cultural differences between the two languages, multi – meaning that tautological expressions may convey, and the context in which these expressions may occur. Fourth, lexical and syntactical errors may lead to differences in meaning.

### **1.5 The Method**

The researcher will examine Arabic tautological expressions as follows:  
First, he will arrange and classify them into categories according to their functions and their relationship to other concepts, such as the (PP), the (MQ), and the (NI). Subsequently, the researcher will address the problems in translating these tautologies into English. These problems will be identified through a test consisting of (25) tautological

expressions (That involve pragmatic, linguistic and cultural problems) chosen from books and the spoken language to be translated from Arabic into English. Then the test will be given to the subjects who will be asked to translate Arabic tautological expressions into English. The researchers will prepare a list of acceptable translations (according to their semantic and pragmatic representations) for these expressions and analyses the student's translations according to their frequency in the light of the above step. Finally, he will consult professors about the acceptability of errors committed by students.

## **2. Review of relates literature**

While reviewing the related literature, the researcher hasn't found any studies on tautology in Arabic. However, they came across a study by Farghal<sup>(1)</sup> (1992) and some studies in English which deal with this topic. In Arabic, tautological expressions can be found here and there in books, journals, periodicals, Dictionaries, newspapers, and in our daily spoken language. To the researcher knowledge, no body has studied these expressions from a translational perspective. Therefore, studying these expressions, classifying and analyzing them would add much to our language. Gazdar<sup>(2)</sup> (1979) argues that in order to formalize the maxim of quantity as it stands, that is, in its full generality we would have to:

- Be able to quantify over informativeness.
- Have some functions which when applied to conversation and a point within it would yield as its value the level of informativeness required. He adds that the reason Grice<sup>(3)</sup> (1975) calls for his generalized conversational Implicature is because he sees the maxims which generate them as more than mere of convention.

1- Farghal, M, colloquial Jordanian Arabic Tautologies, Language discourse and Translation, 1992.

2- Gazdar, G., Pragmatics: Implicature, presupposing and logical Form. New York, New York University Press, 1979.

- According to Grice<sup>(3)</sup> (1975) tautologies follow from flouting the maxim of quantity under the cooperative principle (CP). He explains that the maxims that govern human conversation gives rise to conversational Implicature.
- Fachori<sup>(4)</sup> (1988) following the footsteps of Grice, admits that tautologies don't have meaning by themselves as they all have the same truth conditions. he adds that in spite of that, pragmatically, these tautological expressions do implicate something unsaid. This Implicature can be understood through the (CP).
- Kristina<sup>(5)</sup> (1939) state that Arabic metaphors are found to contain a high degree of pleonasm and tautology, causing misunderstanding when translated into German. The semantic and stylistic discrepancies between Arabic and German are seen as relevant to the translatability of Arabic metaphors into German.
- Fraser<sup>(6)</sup> (1988) while talking about tautologies of the type "a is a" and the flouting of the maxim of quantity, claims that these tautologies signals that speakers intends that the

hearer recognizes: First, that the speaker holds some view towards all objects, and / or references by the noun phrase. Second, that the speaker believes that the listener recognizes this particular view. Third, that the view is relevant to the conversation.

3- Grice, H.P., *Logic and Conversation*, in Cole and Morgan. *Syntax and Semantics: speech Acts*. New York Academic Press, 1975.

4- Fachori ( 1988 )

5- Kristina<sup>(5)</sup> ( 1939 )

6- Fraser, Bruce, *Motoroil is Motoroil, An Account of Nominal English Tautologies*, *Journal of pragmatics*, 12: 215 – 220, 1988.

- Ward and Hirschburg<sup>(7)</sup> ( 1992 ) “ tautological utterances” classify tautologies taken from conversation and media into the following:
  - Equatives “ a is a “ “war is war”.
  - Disjunctions “either p or p “ “ you either agree or disagree “.
  - Conditionals “ if p then p “ “ if I miss I miss”.
  - Relatives “ whatever p . p “ “ it says whatever it says”.

they argue that in case of tautology what distinguishes the meaning of one tautological utterance from another is the source utterance from which these alternatives can be derived, as well as the border context in which utterance is produced.

- Wierzbiza<sup>(8)</sup> ( 1987 ) shows that tautological constructions are partly conventional and language specific, and that each construction has a specific meaning which can't be fully be predicted in terms of any universal pragmatic maxims. she argues that it is important to recognize that “ fair is fair” “ enough is enough” and “ A deal is a deal” are not idioms but rather particularly frequent tokens of productive tautological patterns. Then she criticizes Levinson's account of English tautologies by saying that these tautologies express attitudes which can hardly be judged as true or false. She adds that they are context – dependent in their force. So, alleged implications are part of their semantic representation. Further, she contends that tautological utterances' that are possible in English are simply not available in other languages.

Finally, she concludes that interpretation of tautological utterances is dependent upon languages specific syntactic constructions.

- Levinson<sup>(9)</sup> (1983) discusses tautology while talking about the maxim of quantity. He argues that Implicature in tautological expressions comes about by flouting the maxim of quantity while the cooperative principle is at work. if we ignore Implicature, he adds, these tautological expressions would mean nothing by themselves, as they have the same truth conditions. Nevertheless, these expressions often convey meanings that differ from what is said. By way of illustration, consider the two examples below:



Rasab rasab “ big deal , he failed”  
Fail ( he ) fail ( he )

In his paper, ( 1994 )<sup>(10)</sup> Farghal says that while translating from Arabic into English, the translator tries to bring about an equivalence in the target language. This can be formal or functional. But sometimes it's difficult to find a formal or functional equivalence due to differences between languages and cultures. in this case the translator may opt for ideational equivalence.

For example: حبر على ورق Hibr – ala – waraq

Ink on paper

The ideational equivalence is “ in effective

-Grice<sup>(3)</sup> (1975) argues that some rules are controlled by the C P, which says:  
“Make your contribution as is required.” under this comprehensive principle, he categorizes these rules into four Maxims:

- maxim of Quantity
- maxim of Quality
- maxim of Manner
- maxim of Relation

10- Farghal, M, Ideational Equivalence in Translation, Journal at Pragmatics, 1994.

4- Grice, H.P., Logic and Conversation, in Cole and Morgan. Syntax and Semantics: speech Acts. New York Academic Press, 1975.

The researchers' concern here is the Maxim Quantity, which refers to the quantity of information available and can be controlled by the following two rules suggested by Grice:

5- Make your contribution as informative as is required.

6- Don't make your contribution more informative than is required.

He says that implicatures come about by flouting the Maxim of Quantity while the C P is at work

il – harb harb

def – war war

Which corresponds to “ war is war “.

So, tautology is non – informative at the level of what is said. It is informative at the level of what is implicated. Ward and Hirschburg<sup>(7)</sup> ( 1992 ) conclude that what distinguishes the meaning of one tautological utterance from another is the source utterance from which the alternatives can be derived and the border context in which the utterance was produced.

### **3. Research Design**

This study is a descriptive analysis of some Arabic tautological utterances that are identified by the researcher to have difficulty for translators who are rendering texts from Arabic into English. These tautological utterances are chosen from books, articles, magazines and the spoken language. In fact, the researcher has chosen 25 of these expressions that seem to be problematic for the translators. They are expected to involve pragmatic, linguistic, and cultural problems when translated into English. These tautological utterances were tested by means of a questionnaire given to students to determine the problematic area that may hinder translating those utterances from Arabic into English in a proper way.

1- Ward, G., de and Hirschburg. Tautological Utterances, *Journal of pragmatics*, 1992.

#### **The sample of the study**

The sample of the study consisted of two groups. The first group was comprised of 15 MA students of translation who had taken courses in translation from Arabic into English and vice – versa, and were assumed to have good competence in both languages. The second group consisted of 30 English majors who were then taking a course in translation; in fact, the two groups are native speakers of Arabic and have good knowledge of English.

#### **Instrumentation**

This study was carried out through a test. The items of the test were then distributed to all the subjects who were asked to translate the Arabic tautological expressions into English. Then, a list of acceptable translations for the expressions was prepared. Subsequently, the subjects' translations were analyzed. Finally, the researcher consulted professors about the acceptable translations given by the students.

### **4. Data Analysis**

The result of the test were analysed according to some theoretical consideration and through a set of statistical and descriptive techniques. The analysis of data was done at different levels:

The pragmatic level ( the notion of implicature and the Gricean Maxim of Quantity), the linguistic level, grammar and vocabulary, and finally the cultural level. The translations were analysed and discussed in the light of the parameters above.

#### **Analysis of Data and Discussion**

In an attempt to account for the sources of failures in the students' renderings of the tautological expressions, the researcher discusses three main levels of analysis. The first one is pragmatic level, under which implicature is the main topic since tautological utterances yield through violating the Gricean Maxim of Quantity in a certain context of situation. Under the second level, i.e, the linguistic level, many issues will be discussed to explore their relationship to the students' failure in rendering Arabic tautological expressions, among these issues are the main functions of tautological utterances in Arabic, the syntactic of these expressions, deletion, and multi – meaning utterances in Arabic, among others. The most important level in this section is the cultural level. Here the researchers try to discuss the cultural differences relating to both religious and social

cultures, showing their effects on translating Arabic utterances and concentrating on the cultural gaps between the two cultures. Tautological expressions belong to both semantics and pragmatics. There are instantaneous implicatures that are derivable from the context of situation and core implicatures that can be derived from semantic representations consider the following example:

il - Wald Wald

def – boy boy

This corresponds to the English tautology

“ Boys are boys “

The core meaning of the above tautology is “ the unruly behavior of boys / girls and it should be tolerated”. What this unruly behavior consists of is left for pragmatics. Moreover, tautologies share the same truth conditions, and they flout the maxim of quantity making the utterances meaningful via the generation of implicature, consider the following example:

il – harb harb

def – war war

“ war is war “

as translations are to be pragmatic since implicatures rise through flouting the maxim of quantity when uttering tautological utterances.

#### 4.1 Pragmatic failure

Tautological expressions belonging to both pragmatics and semantics as they have instantaneous implicatures that are derivable from the context of situation and core implicatures that can be derived from semantic representations. for example, the Arabic tautology

il – wald wald

def- boy boy

“ boys are boys”

May be uttered in a variety of contexts:

7- a boy or a girl crying in a presence of a guest

8- a boy or a girl spilling something on his / her clothes

This makes the tautology context – dependent, Farghal<sup>(1)</sup> ( 1992 ) where as the core meaning is “ the unruly behavior of boys and girls which should be tolerated.

#### 4.2 The context of situation

Tautological expressions are context dependent. Farghal<sup>(1)</sup> ( 1992 ) shows that in order to fully understand the machinery generating them, tautologies must be related to the context of situation where the pragmatic significations come into play. consider the following:

il – zawj zawj

Def – husband husband “ A husband is a husband”

This tautology can evoke various interpretations:

9- One must fulfill one’s obligations towards a husband.

10- Appreciation ( it is something good to have husband).

### 4.3 The cooperative principle

Tautologies are governed by the cooperative principle ( C P ), like any other conversational phenomena under which four maxims are subsumed: Quality, Quantity, Manner, and Relation. According to Grice<sup>(3)</sup> ( 1975), the ( C P ) is assumed to be operating through flouting the maxim of Quantity where tautologies follow. This gives rise to particularized conversational implicatures which provide a clear account of how it is possible to mean more than what is said. For example, the Arabic tautology *il – harb harb* “ war is war “ flouts the maxim of Quantity and generates an implicature.

### 4.4 The Maxim of Quantity

Grice<sup>(3)</sup> ( 1975) indicates that the category of quantity relates to the quantity of information to be provided and under it falls two maxims. Flouting the maxim of quantity gives rise to particularized conversational implicatures as mentioned above and provides an account of how to mean more than what is said. Consider the following tautology:

*il – bānāt bānāt* “ A girl is a girl”  
*df – girls girls*

- 1- Farghal, M, colloquial Jordanian Arabic Tautologies, Language discourse and Translation, 1992.
- 2- Grice, H.P., Logic and Conversation, in Cole and Morgan. Syntax and Semantics: speech Acts. New York Academic Press, 1975.

The uttering of this tautology Flouts the maxim of quantity and makes the utterance meaningful via the generation of an implicature.

### 4.5 Implicature

There are two types of Implicature suggested by Grice<sup>(3)</sup> ( 1975 ):

- 3- Standard conversational Implicature that are brought about through observing the conversational maxims.
- 4- particularized conversational Implicature which are given rise to through flouting one or more of the maxims

Our concern here is the second one as tautologies are brought about through flouting the maxim of quantity. for example the Arabic tautology:

*il – bānāt bānāt*  
*df – girls girls*

Which corresponds to the English tautology “ A girl is a girl” It. Flouts the maxim of quantity and implicate more than what is said such as ( crying when encountering a problem, fancying clothes etc.) Most of the students’ renderings were incorrect due to the fact that they lack the pragmatic competence necessary to understand what is meant by these tautologies. They opted for literal translation which led to the distortion of the message conveyed. Consider the following Arabic tautology:

*il – wald wald*  
*def- boy boy*

Which correspond to the English tautology “ boys are boys”. About 80% of the students translated this tautology as “ Boy boy”, “Boys is boys”, “kid kid”, etc. Translators should notice the neutralization of sex with reference to the pair “ boy, girl”. Sex neutralization of this type is possible Arabic, where as it is not in English. When the situation entails sex neutralization, the English tautology used is “ children are children”.

Therefore, when translating such tautologies, students should have looked for the pragmatic import of the tautology since it is brought about by flouting the maxim of quantity and not at the surface structure. Furthermore, they should have taken into account other issues such as reference, sex, deletion, etc. when looking for equivalence in English.

2- Grice, H.P., Logic and Conversation, in Cole and Morgan. Syntax and Semantics: speech Acts. New York Academic Press, 1975.

The translations given by the students showed that they looked at Arabic tautology as were repetition of words.

Consider the following:

il – harb harb

def – war war

They translated this tautology as “ war war “.

They should have opted for “ war is war “

#### **4-6 Linguistic failure**

Due to the lack of competence on the part of the students in both languages, and to the linguistic and semantic problems involved in the given tautologies, the problems are discussed below.

##### **4-6-1 Classification of Arabic Tautologies**

Arabic Tautologies utterances are classified into five groups, Farghal<sup>(1)</sup> ( 1992 ) “ colloquial Jordanian Arabic tautologies”, according to their semantic and pragmatic representations.

##### **4-6-2 Assessment tautologies**

These tautologies convey assessment of human characteristics and they involve around three themes: Calling for tolerance, calling for admiration, or calling for condemnation.

##### **4.6.3 Tolerance tautologies**

The syntactic formula used in tolerance tautologies

Is: N (sg) + N (sg). Observe the following examples:

il – Kursi Kursi

il- harb harb

il – bint bint

def- chair chair

def- war war

def- girl girl

The Arabic tautology calls for the tolerance of behavior characteristic of girls such as crying and fancying clothes. The second tautology calls for the tolerance of tragic consequences’ of war like loss, damage, etc. the third one calls for tolerance of bad qualities of objects (discomfort of the chair).

- 1- Farghal, M, colloquial Jordanian Arabic Tautologies, Language discourse and Translation, 1992.

Some of the students opted for literal translation of these tautologies, about 73 % of them translated these tautologies as “ girl girl” , “ war war” , and “ chair chair”. They failed to translate these tautologies appropriately and they opted for this choice because of the absence of the auxiliary verb in Arabic. So, they translated them as they are in Arabic into English without taking into account the linguistics differences between the two languages. In order to convey the message correctly they should have been translated as: “Girls are Girls” , “ war is war” , chairs are chairs”. Another point to be clarified here is the use of number. Some of the students fell victims when translating the singular tautology “ il bint bint” “def girl girl” in Arabic into a singular tautology in English, i.e, “ A girl is a girl”.

#### 4.6.4 Admiration Tautologies

These sorts of tautologies are expressed by the following syntactic formula: N ( adj. )  
N(adj)

Consider the following:

il – hilwa hilwa

def – pretty (she) pretty ( she )

This tautology implicates that “she is a pretty” and this can’t escape any body’s attention, about 80% of the students mistranslated this tautology. they translated it as “ sweet is sweet”, “ beautiful beautiful” this tautology is context – dependent. the appropriate translation is “ she is unmistakably pretty”.

#### 4.6.5 Condemnation Tautologies

The following formula is employed to bring about this type of tautology Adj. Adj.  
consider the following:

il bisha’ah bisha’ah

def – ugly ugly

Most of the students’ translations were literal due to the absence of the auxiliary verb in Arabic and the lack of both pragmatic and semantic competence in both languages. So, they opted for the following translations:

“ugly ugly”, “ the ugly is ugly”.

The acceptable translation of this tautology is:

“she is unmistakably ugly”.

Absolute Generalization Tautologies

The syntactic formula for these tautologies is Np, Np, these tautologies are used to generalize about human activities to implicate that they are essentially the same. Consider the following:

ill - banat banat

def – girls girls, which correspond for the English tautology “ A girl is a girl”.

#### 4.6.6 Obligation tautologies

Arabic obligation tautologies use the formula: N poss N poss. take the following example “ Ummak yani Ummak” mother means mother which correspond to the English

tautology “A mother is a mother”. Some students opted for paraphrasing this tautology when translating it into English. For example, “you have to respect your mother”. Another example is: “Lammā badrus badrus” when ( I ) study ( I ) study. This tautology reconfirms the commitment. An appropriate translation of this tautology is “when I study, I do good job at that”. About 50 % of the students were unable to translate it appropriately.

#### 4.6.7 Indifference tautologies

The syntactic formula used for these tautologies is:

V past V past safar safar  
left ( he ) left (he)

Which corresponds to the English tautology:

“Big deal ! he left”.

Most of the students’ renderings were literal.

#### 4.6.8. Fatalistic tautologies

Arabic fatalistic tautologies refer to the past and future events. They call for the acceptance of their being predestined. Therefore, they should not be dwelled on as we have no control over them.

The syntactic formula used here is Rel V past V past  
Rel V future – V future

Consider the following: illi – māt māt  
def – died died  
illi baduh imūt mūt  
def – want die die

The first one implicate that what has already happened can’t be changed. So, it’s not worth dwelling on. The second Arabic tautology implicates that we have to accept this event as it is pre–destined. An appropriate translation of those two tautologies:

“That who died died”.

“That who has been pre – destined to die will die”.

The students were unable to differentiate between the two. They didn’t notice the cultural and religious differences between Arabic and English. Therefore, they opted for translations such as “ who wants to die, so what.”, “ Any one wants to die, he can.” , “ everybody should be die.” , “if someone want to die, he will die”.

### 5. 1 Cultural failure

Students of translation must be aware of the cultural differences between the two languages ( i. e., Arabic and English). A lack of knowledge and understanding of the two cultures will lead to a communication breakdown. Of course, there are two aspects of culture: social and religious. Since Arabic and western cultures are two remote ones, translators should notice these differences when trying to bring about an equivalence for a certain tautology in Arabic. Observe the following Arabic tautology:

illi – laik laik willi khatik khatik  
def- yours yours def- miss(you) miss(you)

This tautology indicates that a human being has no choice and he has to be satisfied with what he has got. This corresponds to the English tautology:

“You have only what you are pre-destined to have “.

About 66% of the students were unable to give an appropriate rendering of the tautology since it has social indication in Arabic which differs from English. Some of the students rendering were: “nothing can come to you opposite your fate”, “you can’t change your destiny”. The students opted for literal translations or paraphrasing. their translation will not be understood by the people of other cultures since these social and religious beliefs are sometimes absent in their cultures.

Another example of this type: ”ili – baduh imūt bimūt”

Which corresponds to “ that who has been pre- destined to die will die”. This tautology calls for the acceptance of facts of life as we have no choice in them. About 85% of the students mistranslated the above tautology as they didn’t convey the meaning in the target language. They translated the tautology as “who wants to die, let him die”, “nobody can postpone his life” etc. Translator here should opt for ideational equivalence to give the intended meaning of the utterance. In addition to the above mentioned reasons, there are others that cause the distortion of the message conveyed. Among these are the following:

## 2- the absence of time reference

Most Arabic tautological expressions don’t have references that indicate time. Time is shown through verbs or other words. Consider the following: ill – harb harb  
def- war war

This corresponds to the English tautology “war is war”. This tautology has no time reference in Arabic which makes it difficult for the translator to choose the correct verb to be. it refers to both the past and the present. to refer to the future another word is used bidal (will stay).

Many of the students mistranslated it. They used different verbs since they had no time references. The students faced difficulty in finding out the meaning of certain words used in the utterances, as most of the Arabic tautological utterances are used in the spoken language, i.e. they are colloquial. This leads to misunderstanding and to the distortion of the message. For example

“il – malih malih walaw libs ilsheeh”

“def – good good even if wears shrank”.

The students who translated it were not familiar with the word ( sheeh). Since it has different connotations in our daily language.

## 3- Deletion

Some words are deleted in Arabic for rehtorial purposes. Consider the following:

il – jar jar walaw ramak bil hijar

def – neighbor neighbor even if throw you stones.

The second word jar sometimes deleted to mean the same

It is said to mean “ a neighbor is a neighbor “

## 4- singular VS plural

Translators of Arabic tautological utterances didn’t notice differences in syntax and structure of these utterances. They looked at the surface structure of the utterance. For

example, the translated singular tautologies in Arabic as singular ones in English when they are need to be translated plural. Consider the following:

il - bint bint                      il – bānāt bānāt

def – girl girl                      def – girls girls

They translated them as “A girl is a girl”, “Girls are Girls”.

The appropriate renderings are “Girls are Girls”, “aGirl is aGirl”

### **5- Neutralization of sex**

Neutralization of sex is possible in Arabic, whereas, it is not in English. This should be taken in consideration. Consider the following: “il – walad wald “ def – boy boy this is said in Arabic to mean both a boy and a girl.

### **6- politeness**

Arabic tautological utterances are sometimes used in a context that involves politeness. For example

illi – sar sar

def – happened happened

It used to refer to something bad happened in the past and the speaker is not willing to mention it in the present. This corresponds to the English tautology “what has happened has happened”.

### **7- intonation**

Arabic tautological utterances could mean something and its opposite depending on the intonation of the utterance. so, translators should consider the context in which these utterances are used so that they could give appropriate renderings of them.

To sum up we can say that students’ lack of competence in both languages and cultures led to across cultural breakdown. 80% of the students opted for literal translation or paraphrasing to bring about an equivalence in the target language. Therefore, it’s necessary to have knowledge and experience in pragmatics, linguistics, and cultural aspects.

## **Conclusions and implications**

The main concern of this research has been to find out the pragmatic, linguistic, and cultural problems that face a translator and lead to the distortion of the message when translating the 25 Arabic tautological utterances into English. Through discussion and analysis of the problems in translating tautological expressions, the researcher tried to find out the source of failures that led to the message distortion. He discussed them under three major categories: pragmatic, linguistic, and cultural. The main finding of the study indicated that the main reason that led to the distortion of the message and caused problems in translating Arabic tautologies was the lack of pragmatic, linguistic, and cultural competence, since the translator was unable to advance appropriate translations of the expressions. There is no doubt that mistranslating Arabic Tautological utterances will lead to misunderstanding of the message conveyed in the target language. Most of the students have opted for literal translations of the given Arabic tautologies which make

it difficult for English speakers to understand the message conveyed. Furthermore, most of the Fatalistic and religious tautologies in Arabic don't exist in the English culture. So, there should be some kind of paraphrasing if the message is to be conveyed in an appropriate way. Students have dealt with Arabic tautologies as a kind of repetition. They didn't pay any attention to the pragmatic import of such expressions and the different functions that they conveyed. They didn't pay any attention to the linguistic and cultural differences between the source language and the target language. All this resulted in an inappropriate rendering of the given expressions. In addition, most Arabic tautological expressions are context – dependent. Therefore, students should understand to the context of situation of these utterances before trying to translate them in order to have an appropriate rendering. They should have opted for ideational equivalent in the absence of both formal and communicative equivalence.

### **Suggested strategies and recommendations**

The following strategies are suggested for translating Arabic tautological expressions into English:

- Translators should have a better knowledge and understanding of both languages and cultures of both the source text and the target text.
- Translators have many choices when translating tautological expressions into English. They should opt for ideational equivalence if they fail to find an appropriate formal or functional equivalence, this would facilitate the translator's job in the process of translation.
- Translators should pay more attention to the pragmatic import of Arabic tautological utterances in order to give an appropriate rendering of the utterances. Implicature that came out through violating the Gricean Maxim of Quantity should be taken into account, otherwise these tautological utterances would be of no value.
- As a result of their being context – dependent in Arabic, deletion, the absence of reference, and multi – meaning of tautological expressions, translators should understand them well before starting the translation process to find the most appropriate way for rendering them into English taking into accounts the problematic areas that lay in them
- Cultural and religious tautological expressions are also a problematic areas for a translator, what is implicated by one tautology in Arabic may not implicate the same thing in English or may be absent. In this case the translator should opt for paraphrasing to give an appropriate rendering that seems to be acceptable in the target language.
- The functions of Arabic tautological expressions can be similar to each other. Sometimes, it is difficult for translator to decide whether a certain tautology is said to mean indifference or it is absolute generalization tautology. In addition, sometimes the same tautology may hold different functions. Translators should study their functions well before translating them.
- The intention of the speaker of the source language text should be taken into consideration and given more attention.

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