

Errors in Anaphora Translation across Languages: From English to Arabic

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to identify the systematic errors in the translation of anaphora committed by some Iraqi university students because of their weaknesses in understanding that complicated topic. Students make many different kinds of translation errors, and this is particularly apparent in more complex linguistic structures that can even baffle specialized translators. One of the critical aspects of translation studies, anaphora, is challenging for Arabic learners to understand as its nuances can be initially difficult to comprehend. Anaphora attempting to resolve antecedent references is the key focus of the study, where it serves three main purposes: One: to walk the reader through anaphora in detail, its historical background and examples; Two: to classify various anaphoric forms based on linguistic meanings and functions; Lastly, to identify strategies for achieving better precision in identifying antecedents and anaphora. This contextual evidence examines the requisite linguistic and pragmatic awareness necessary for the nuanced and contextualized translation of commonly encountered anaphoric expressions across various genres of real-life texts, thereby providing an in-depth analysis of the need for meticulous translation procedures concerning anaphoric expressions. The reflexive pronoun 'herself' functions as an anaphoric expression. Regardless, some learners incorrectly translate 'herself' as hiya mistakenly aligning it with the definite pronoun 'she.' The exact translation should be 'nafsuha'.

Keywords: Anaphora, Translation, Interlingual Errors, Intralingual Errors, Antecedent, Anaphoric Expression, Pronouns

Introduction

Translation mistakes are common among language learners, and many of them can be due to an incomplete understanding of the target language or their first language. In this Study, we focused on some aspects of anaphora translation. A few typical questions are discussed. 1. What defines anaphora? 2. What categories do linguistic phenomena exist? 3. What is the significance of anaphora in translation? 4. What are the most prevalent errors in the translation of this text? 5. Are these errors interlingual, occurring between languages, or intralingual, occurring in a single language? These questions will be addressed in this study. Ultimately, given that pronouns constitute a significant topic in their own right and represent the predominant component of anaphora, they receive. This is particularly due to concrete pronouns used in specific sentences which lead to several translation errors by learners. These faults were found through theoretical examinations administered to first-year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Kufa.

To begin the analysis, we clarify the concept of anaphora. Anaphora pertains to the mechanism of referring back within a text, and it encompasses two crucial elements: the antecedent and the anaphoric expression. For instance, in the example (1) "John has a car. It is a Mercedes," there exists a backward reference where the pronoun 'it' serves as the anaphoric expression linked to the antecedent 'a car.' Notably, anaphoric expressions can be categorized into various types, and translation errors frequently arise when dealing with them. Take example (2): "Alex, who asked us about the exam." The antecedent

is Alex, and the anaphoric expression is the relative pronoun 'who' (Lata et al.). One of common mistakes among the learners is to see this one as 'who' is an interrogative pronoun (min) instead of its correct meaning in Arabic (al-dhī). In any case, this study investigates the main difficulties implicated in the learners' translations of anaphoric references.

The Roots of Anaphora

Anaphora is a Greek word that means 'to carry back,' which is formed from two items: 'ana,' meaning 'back' or 'repeat,' and 'pherein,' meaning 'to bear.' This word entered English through Latin intermediaries (Schmolz). Anaphora applies to linguistics and literature, which will be considered in two separate aspects. Anaphora was first used in English in 1589, as a figure of repetition in its original meaning. This is illustrated through the long-forgotten words of Sir Walter Raleigh: To think on death it is a misery, To think on life it is vanity: To think on the world verily it is, To think there here man hath no perfect bliss. This is made clear by the repetition of the phrase 'to think' at the beginning of each line, serving to emphasize the effect of this rhetorical device.

The Role of Anaphora in Linguistic Structures

In linguistics, anaphora is categorized as a specific type of reference. Reference itself denotes the relationship of identity that exists among grammatical elements, such as when a pronoun identifies a noun or noun phrase (Crystal). While the meanings of anaphora and reference are closely related, since anaphora can be viewed as a subset of reference, a key distinction exists between the two concepts. Anaphora specifically pertains to the relationship between two entities within a given context. This relationship is characterized by two components: the initial mention, referred to as the antecedent, and the subsequent reference known as the anaphoric expression (Yule). This principle can be elucidated using several illustrative examples:

1. In the sentence "John said that he was a music lover," "John" serves as an antecedent, while "he" acts as an anaphoric expression.
2. The instruction "Finish your homework. It will save time" presents "homework" as the

antecedent, with "it" functioning as an anaphoric expression that refers back to it.

3. In "I like his car. It's a new one," the expression "his car" establishes the antecedent, and "one" operates as the anaphoric expression indicating the newness of the car.
4. The sentence "We found a house to rent, but the kitchen was very small" illustrates how "the kitchen" serves as an anaphoric expression that relates back to the antecedent "a house," being an integral part of it.
5. Lastly, in "I got on a bus and asked the driver if it went near the downtown area," the antecedent is "a bus," while "the driver" acts as an anaphoric expression, denoting a component of the bus. Thus, the structural and semantic mechanisms underlying anaphora can be comprehensively understood using these examples (Halliday and Hasan).

The Role of Anaphora in Literary Analysis

The phenomenon of anaphora originates in literary contexts through repetition. While our primary focus is on the field of linguistics, it remains essential to briefly consider the literary aspect to enhance understanding. As previously indicated, anaphora in literature is characterized by the repetition of words or phrases at the start of lines. An example of repetition could be found in the poem "London" in the way the phrase "in every" is used throughout the first three lines: "In every cry of every Man, In every infant's cry of fear, In every voice, in every ban, The mind-forg'd manacles I hear." Charles Dickens also employs anaphora in the opening lines to *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." There, the repetition of "it was," and the recurrence of "times," amplified the thematic contrasts. In English literature, both Blake's poem and Dickens' novel are examples of the effective use of anaphora.

The Importance of Anaphoric References and their Corresponding Antecedents

The analysis should outline two major dimensions: A) Coreference: An anaphoric expression is associated with its antecedent with a clear direct term, meaning that the former is no more and no less than the synonym to the latter. For example, in the following sentences, Emily enjoys painting. She often visited galleries. The anaphoric expression here is she, which is the synonym for Emily. In this case, both mean the same entity and thus have the same identity. B) Substitution: In the case of this relational expression, an anaphor and its antecedent have a more indirect co-referential basically otherwise bound concept. For example, mark purchased a new laptop. Sarah decided to buy a tablet. In the second sentence the word tablet substitutes for the laptop in the first sentence. In this case, there is no co-referential connection because the two objects are different. The concept of anaphora is also widely used in the author's works as a stylistic device to emphasize narratives. A vivid example is the first sentence in Moby Dick by Herman Melville: Call me Ishmael. In this case, anaphora serves as an example of the author's style. In everyday life, anaphora is used to avoid explicit context and repetition. For instance, the president has not yet given his speech but is seen in public, in articulation, he is suspected to speak soon. In this case, the noun phrase the president can substitute for the pronoun he. It is essential to note that the referent is the full noun phrase the president because all of it must be substituted and not only the noun president. In summary, an anaphora is suitable for ensuring the coherence of the text. Thus, this is a powerful tool to ensure linguistic coherence without monotony and explicitness.

Types of Anaphora

Anaphora is observed across various sentences, texts, and contexts, functioning as a cohesive device that links ideas. The classifications of anaphora can be categorized based on the nature of an anaphoric expressions and their antecedents. This paper will focus on categorizing anaphora by form, particularly in the context of analyzing interlingual errors encountered during the translation of anaphora from

English to Arabic. Anaphora can be manifested in three principal forms (Finch):

Pronominal Anaphora (Coreference)

This form is the most significant and commonly encountered type of anaphora, which occurs when the antecedent is a noun phrase. This phenomenon can be observed at several points.

Personal Pronouns: These pronouns serve to identify individuals and can be divided into two categories: A) Subjective pronouns: I, you, he, she, it, we, they B) Objective pronouns: me, you, him, her, it, us, for instance: (1) John works at school. He is a teacher. (2) We visited John and saw his new flat. (3) Did Linda leave her documents at home? (4) Look at him! He is going to crash into the car.

Reflexive Pronouns: These pronouns reflect back to a noun phrase and include forms like myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves. Examples include: (1) Jolly can do the homework herself. (2) Mohammed and I were talking with ourselves. (3) I carried the bags myself. (4) You cannot carry the bag yourself.

Possessive Pronouns: These pronouns denote ownership and can be classified as: A) Determiners: my, your, his, her, its, our, their B) Standalone forms: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs Examples are: (1) Each person knows their name. (2) Since my car did not work, I borrowed yours. (3) The government is enhancing its programs to assist individuals who are in need. (4) Everyone should engage in training. This exemplifies the first type of anaphora, achievable through pronominal expressions in sentences, texts, and contexts. Typically, third-person pronouns function as anaphoric expressions, while first and second-person pronouns can act as antecedents when combined with possessive forms. The pronouns we, us, our, and ourselves are considered anaphoric expressions when referring to third-person subjects (Schmolz).

Indefinite Pronouns: The category of indefinite pronouns includes one(s), other(s), another, both, all, each, enough, several, some, any, either, neither, none, many, and much. In this context, we discuss the notion of substitution, with a particular focus on the indefinite pronoun "one." Here, "one" serves as a substitute, indicating that there is not a one-to-

one correspondence between the antecedent and the anaphoric expression ‘one.’ Consider the following examples: (1) I need a pen. Do you have one? (2) I gave him a yellow crayon, but he wanted a green crayon. In these instances, a differentiation is made between the specific items a pen, a crayon, and “one” as “one” refers to a new pen or a differently colored crayon.

Relative pronouns: who, whom, which, whose, that, zero. Canonical conditions are anaphoric with differing functional roles. Let us consider the possible translation errors associated with these pronouns. For instance: (1) They say he was the best worker and true he was. (2) A doctor is a person who works in a hospital. (3) I have a preference for house built on hills.

Interlingual and Intralingual

First, it was necessary to define an interlingual translation. One important aspect of translation studies is differentiating interlingual translation from intralingual translation. The following definitions are relevant (Gahraman):

A) Interlingual Translation is the process of translating a text from one language system into another (e.g., translating a text from English into Arabic.

B) In contrast, Intralingual Translation involves translation that occurs within the bounds of a single language, demonstrated through the rephrasing or paraphrasing of English texts into alternative English forms. This research paper will primarily concentrate on interlingual translation, with a particular focus on the interlingual errors that can emerge during the anaphora translation process from English to Arabic.

Similar Analysis

Arab learners of English often encounter difficulties when differentiating between two words, which despite differing in spelling, meaning, and grammatical function, may seem similar in translation. This issue can be illustrated through the use of reflexive pronouns in English, which include myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, and themselves. According to Quirk et al., the primary function of reflexive pronouns is to act as a noun phrase within a clause or phrase

structure, serving as either an object, a complement, or a prepositional complement. Notably, common reflexive pronouns that convey anaphoric references include third-person pronouns (Schmolz). For instance, in the sentence “Nancy bought herself some ice cream,” the proper noun Nancy serves as the antecedent, while the reflexive pronoun herself operates as the anaphoric expression. However, some learners erroneously translate ‘herself’ as “hiya”, mistakenly aligning it with the definite pronoun ‘she.’ The accurate translation should be “nafsuhā”. Similarly, with ‘himself,’ the appropriate rendering is not simply he but rather “nafsuhu”. This demonstrates that translations of reflexive pronouns do not mirror those of subjective pronouns. Regarding the reflexive pronoun ‘itself,’ when translating into Arabic, one must consider the gender of the antecedent, as there is no direct Arabic equivalent for ‘itself.’ Therefore, its translation would align more closely with the translations for ‘herself’ or ‘himself’ based on contextual gender.

Evaluation of Inferior Translation Quality

Learners occasionally commit errors that do not account for the varying grammatical functions of words within a given text. The English language is notable for its complex system of grammatical functions associated with its lexicon. This discussion will focus specifically on relative pronouns, which can act as anaphoric expressions. The relative pronouns include: who, whom, which, whose, and that (Schmolz). Errors in the translation of anaphora in this context often stem from misunderstandings regarding the dual role of certain relative pronouns as both interrogative pronouns and anaphoric expressions. For instance, learners might mistakenly translate the anaphoric expression “who” as “Min” based on its interrogative meaning instead of its role as a relative pronoun. In the example sentence “Leo, who is just crossing the street,” Leo serves as the antecedent while “who” functions as the anaphoric expression. The accurate translation for the relative pronoun “who” in this context should therefore be “alladhī” with the feminine form being “allatī” if the antecedent is feminine. A similar phenomenon occurs with the word “where” when it functions as an anaphoric expression. Learners may incorrectly

translate it as “ayna” in a sentence such as “He lives on the street where we used to live,” whereas “where” in its anaphoric role should be rendered as “Ḥayth”. It is crucial for Arab learners to develop a nuanced understanding of words that possess multiple grammatical functions within the English language to ensure accurate translation and to mitigate confusion between differing meanings.

Literary Translation

This statement was translated by students: “The students like each other.” Their translation interpreted it as “Yuḥibbūn al-ṭullāb kulla al-ākhirīn”. The original sentence utilises “the students” as the antecedent and “each other” as an anaphoric expression. Both “each other” and “one another” function as reciprocal pronouns, as noted by Kolln et al. It is critical to recognize that the translation of these pronouns should not adhere to a literal interpretation, given their interconnected meanings and usages. The grammatically accurate translation of the original sentence would be “Yuḥibbūn al-ṭullāb ba‘ḍahum al-ba‘ḍ”. Here, “each other” appropriately translates to “Ba‘ḍahum al-ba‘ḍ”. This principle similarly applies to the translation of “one another.” A common misconception among learners is to interpret it as two distinct words, resulting in translations like “Wāḥid ākhir”. For example, a literal translation of the English sentence “The students help one another with their homework” is often incorrectly translated as “Yusā‘idūn al-ṭullāb wāḥid ākhir fī wājibātihim”. The correct translation, in accordance with the reciprocal nature of the pronoun, is “Aḥaduhumā al-ākhir”. Repeating phrases when learning English, can result in frequent translation errors. Hence, both Arabic and English must be considered linguistically in terms of translation accuracy.

Conclusion

In this discussion, key considerations and suggestions will be offered to learners to ensure that they do not encounter any misunderstandings and are able to better understand discourse. This understanding is vital for having a proper translation that captures the entire meaning of the source text. An important element is perception of the structural organization of the target language as there is a gap

between English and Arabic language. It is essential that certain structures are known as translations that adhere to proper syntax.

Additionally, the idea of anaphora needs to be closely explored, in terms of linguistic and literary contexts enabling or disabling the translator’s ability to make the correct translational decisions. In these domains, anaphora has two connotations, so the translator must identify which anaphora he is working with before he can have a go at a translation. In addition, this requires choosing and analyzing both the antecedent and the anaphoric expressions to explain their connections. It helps with the identification of the components of words or phrases in sentences. This paper primarily concentrates on interlingual translation, with a particular focus on the interlingual errors that can occur during the anaphora translation from English to Arabic.

Moreover, learners must recognize that many words have multiple functions in the used context, resulting in a different meanings in the translation. This is usually because people know the rules of linguistics without even realizing they know them. Hence, nurturing an acute sensitivity to the modi operandi of words, idioms, and phrases will only serve to develop translation skills.

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