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Translation Errors among Third-Level English Students at the University of Kordofan: Lecturers' Perceptions

By

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Abstract

Translation competence involves more than knowledge of two languages. It requires the ability to understand meaning, recognize cultural and contextual differences, select appropriate equivalents, and produce an accurate and acceptable target text. This study investigates lecturers' perceptions of the major types and causes of translation errors among third-level English language students at the Faculty of Education, University of Kordofan, Sudan, as well as their perceived effects and possible pedagogical responses. A descriptive survey design was employed. Data were collected through a 25-item questionnaire administered to 50 English language lecturers, teachers, and translation specialists. The responses were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The findings indicate that respondents strongly perceived translation errors as affecting translation quality and communication. Ninety-four percent agreed that translation errors affect the overall quality of translated texts, while 90% indicated that such errors may lead to misunderstanding of the source message. Linguistic differences between English and Arabic and weak grammatical knowledge were identified by 92% of respondents as important contributing factors. Limited vocabulary and time pressure were each reported by 88%, while cultural differences, literal translation, and lack of subject knowledge were reported by 86%, 84%, and 82%, respectively. Semantic errors received the highest agreement among the perceived error types (94%), followed by lexical and terminology errors (90% each) and grammatical errors (88%). Regarding pedagogical responses, proofreading was highly endorsed (96%), followed by translation-skills training (94%), dictionary use (92%), and peer review (88%). Although 70% of respondents considered machine translation potentially useful, 92% agreed that it can produce inaccurate translations. The findings suggest that translation instruction should integrate linguistic development, cultural and pragmatic awareness, strategic competence, systematic revision, authentic translation practice, and critical use of translation technologies. Since the findings are based on educators' perceptions rather than direct analysis of students' translation products, further research should examine actual student translations to determine the nature and frequency of translation errors.

Keywords: translation errors; error analysis; translation competence; English-Arabic translation; translator training; Sudanese higher education; machine translation.

1. Introduction

Translation plays an important role in intercultural communication, education, knowledge exchange, and professional communication. It enables information, ideas, specialized knowledge, and cultural meanings to move between languages and communities. However, translation is not simply a process of replacing words in one language with words in another. It requires understanding the

source message, interpreting context, selecting appropriate equivalents, and producing a target text that conveys the intended meaning naturally and accurately. For university students learning English as a foreign language, translation can be particularly demanding. Students are required to understand the source text, recognize its linguistic and cultural features, select suitable equivalents, and formulate a coherent target-language text. Difficulties at any of these stages may result in inaccurate,



incomplete, unnatural, or inappropriate translations. The problem is especially relevant to English-Arabic translation because the two languages differ considerably in grammatical structure, lexical organization, syntactic patterns, discourse conventions, and cultural expression. Such differences may encourage learners to depend on familiar structures from their first language or to use word-for-word translation when an appropriate equivalent is difficult to identify. Previous discussions of translation difficulties have highlighted several factors, including linguistic interference, inadequate grammatical and lexical knowledge, literal translation, cultural differences, insufficient subject knowledge, and limited translation practice. These problems indicate that translation difficulties cannot be explained by a single linguistic weakness. Rather, they may involve several dimensions of translation competence, including linguistic, cultural, strategic, and procedural knowledge.

The problem addressed in this study is particularly important in the context of third-level English students at the University of Kordofan. The original study identified translation errors as an important concern among students and examined factors such as literal translation, inadequate language knowledge, cultural differences, and insufficient practice. However, an important methodological issue must be clarified. The empirical instrument used in the study collected information from lecturers, teachers, and translation specialists rather than directly examining samples of students' translated texts. Therefore, the evidence represents educators' perceptions of students' translation difficulties rather than measured frequencies of actual student errors. This distinction also identifies a research gap. While perceptions of lecturers can provide valuable pedagogical information about recurring difficulties observed in translation teaching, they cannot establish the actual distribution or frequency of errors in students' translation products. Direct analysis of student translations is therefore needed to complement perception-based evidence. The present study contributes institutionally grounded evidence by examining educators' perceptions of translation errors, their perceived causes and effects, and the pedagogical measures that may help reduce them.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What types of translation errors are perceived to be most common among third-level English language students at the University of Kordofan?
2. What linguistic, cultural, strategic, and contextual factors are perceived to contribute to these errors?
3. How do perceived translation errors affect translation quality and communicative accuracy?
4. What pedagogical and technological interventions are perceived to be useful for reducing translation errors?

The study is significant because it provides evidence from a Sudanese university context and highlights the perspectives of educators involved in English language and translation instruction. The findings may assist teachers and curriculum designers in identifying areas that require greater attention in translation courses, particularly grammar, vocabulary, cultural competence,

revision, peer review, and critical use of translation technologies. At the same time, the findings should be interpreted as perceptions rather than direct measurements of students' actual translation performance.

Research Gap

Although previous studies have examined translation difficulties from linguistic, cultural, semantic, lexical, and pedagogical perspectives, there remains a need for institution-specific evidence concerning the translation difficulties experienced by English language students in Sudanese higher education. In particular, limited attention has been given to the perceptions of lecturers and translation specialists concerning the types of errors students are perceived to make, the factors that contribute to these difficulties, their perceived effects on translation quality, and the pedagogical strategies that may help address them. The present study responds to this gap by examining the perceptions of lecturers, teachers, and translation specialists at the University of Kordofan. At the same time, the study recognizes an important methodological gap in the existing evidence. Perception-based data can provide valuable information about recurring difficulties observed in translation teaching, but they cannot establish the actual frequency or distribution of errors in students' translation products. Therefore, the present study does not claim to provide a direct measurement of students' translation errors. Instead, it provides educators' perceptions as institutionally grounded evidence and identifies the need for future research based on systematic analysis of students' actual English-Arabic translations. In this way, the study provides a basis for subsequent corpus-based and performance-based investigations of translation errors among Sudanese university students.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Translation as Meaning Transfer and Cross-Linguistic Communication

Translation has traditionally been discussed in terms of equivalence and the transfer of textual material from a source language into a target language. Catford (1965) defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language with equivalent textual material in another. Larson (1998), however, emphasizes meaning transfer rather than the mechanical transfer of linguistic forms. These perspectives demonstrate that successful translation cannot be reduced to word-for-word substitution. Contemporary approaches to Translation Studies have increasingly emphasized functional, contextual, and communicative aspects of translation. A competent translator needs to consider not only the meanings of individual words but also the ways in which meaning is constructed through syntax, discourse, context, culture, and communicative purpose. Baker (2018) similarly emphasizes the importance of context, textual relations, and appropriate equivalence in producing effective translations.

2.2 Translation Competence

Translation competence is multidimensional and extends beyond general bilingual ability. It involves knowledge of the source and target languages, extra-linguistic knowledge, knowledge about

translation, instrumental competence, and strategic competence. The PACTE framework is particularly relevant because it conceptualizes translation competence as a combination of interacting sub-competencies rather than simple knowledge of two languages. This perspective has important implications for student translators. A learner may possess reasonable general English proficiency and still experience translation difficulties because translation requires additional skills. These include interpreting contextual meaning, selecting appropriate equivalents, consulting reference materials, identifying and solving translation problems, revising translation decisions, and evaluating the final target text.

Albir and Alves (2017) emphasize the distinction between translation competence and ordinary bilingual competence. Translation competence develops through practice, problem solving, strategic decision-making, and experience. Kiraly (2016) likewise emphasizes situated and learner-centered approaches to translator education, suggesting that students should be actively involved in realistic translation tasks rather than merely learning isolated translation rules.

The present study therefore views translation competence as a combination of linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, strategic ability, revision skills, and appropriate use of translation resources.

2.3 Translation Errors: Concept and Classification

Translation errors can be understood as deviations that negatively affect meaning, communicative function, appropriateness, or target-text acceptability. The classification of translation errors varies according to the theoretical framework adopted. Pym (1992), for example, distinguishes between binary errors, which produce an incorrect solution, and non-binary errors, which produce solutions that may be acceptable but are not optimal.

House (2015) distinguishes between overt and covert errors according to the relationship among the source text, target text, and communicative function. From a pedagogical perspective, however, a more practical classification can assist teachers in identifying recurrent areas of difficulty.

The major categories relevant to the present study include:

- **Lexical errors:** inappropriate word choice, false equivalence, and inappropriate interpretation of polysemous words.
- **Grammatical errors:** inappropriate tense, agreement, articles, prepositions, and other grammatical structures.
- **Syntactic errors:** inappropriate sentence organization or inappropriate transfer of source-language structures.
- **Semantic errors:** distortion, omission, addition, or misunderstanding of the source meaning.
- **Terminological errors:** inappropriate translation of specialized or technical vocabulary.
- **Cultural and pragmatic errors:** failure to recognize culturally embedded meanings, idioms, references, or communicative conventions.
- **Stylistic errors:** inappropriate register, tone, cohesion, or target-language naturalness.

These categories demonstrate that translation errors may occur at different linguistic and communicative levels. Consequently, identifying and correcting errors requires more than checking grammatical accuracy.

2.4 Linguistic Interference and Literal Translation

Linguistic interference is one of the recurring problems in second-language learning and translation. Learners may process a source-language expression through structures associated with their first language and consequently produce target-language constructions that are grammatically, lexically, or semantically inappropriate. Literal translation represents one possible manifestation of this problem. Word-for-word translation can sometimes be appropriate, particularly where the structures and meanings of the source and target languages correspond closely. However, it becomes problematic when languages encode meaning differently. Idioms, collocations, metaphors, grammatical relations, and culturally embedded expressions frequently require reformulation rather than direct lexical substitution. Newmark (1988) emphasizes the need for translators to consider the communicative meaning of expressions rather than relying mechanically on individual lexical equivalents. The original study identified literal translation as an important perceived source of translation errors. The questionnaire results showed that 84% of respondents agreed that word-for-word translation contributes to translation errors. This finding suggests that students may need greater training in identifying translation units, interpreting context, and selecting meaning-based equivalents.

2.5 Cultural and Pragmatic Competence

Translation takes place between cultures as well as between languages. Expressions that appear straightforward at the lexical level may contain cultural assumptions, associations, references, or pragmatic meanings that cannot be transferred directly from one language to another. Cultural competence is therefore an important component of translation competence. Translators need to understand the social and cultural contexts of both languages and determine whether an expression should be retained, adapted, paraphrased, or replaced with a culturally appropriate equivalent. Hatim and Mason (1997) emphasize the relationship between translation and communication, including the social and pragmatic dimensions of language. Similarly, Nord (1997) stresses the importance of purpose and communicative function in translation. These perspectives suggest that successful translation requires attention to both linguistic form and communicative context. The findings of the present study reinforce this position. Eighty-six percent of respondents identified cultural differences as an important source of translation errors, while the same proportion reported difficulty in translating cultural expressions accurately. This suggests that translation courses should provide students with opportunities to analyze authentic texts and examine cultural and pragmatic differences between English and Arabic.

2.6 The Role of Grammar, Vocabulary, and Subject Knowledge

Translation competence depends substantially on linguistic resources. A translator who lacks grammatical knowledge may

misunderstand relationships within the source text or produce unacceptable structures in the target language. Similarly, limited vocabulary may restrict the ability to identify contextually appropriate equivalents. The findings of the present study provide strong support for these concerns. Ninety-two percent of respondents identified weak grammatical knowledge as a contributing factor to translation errors, while 88% associated translation errors with limited vocabulary. Lack of subject knowledge was also identified by 82% of respondents as an important contributing factor. These findings suggest that translation instruction should not be separated from broader language development. Translation courses need to be supported by systematic development of grammar, vocabulary, reading, discourse competence, terminology, and subject-specific knowledge.

Vocabulary development should also go beyond memorizing bilingual equivalents. Students need to develop contextual lexical competence, which enables them to determine which equivalent is appropriate in a particular semantic, grammatical, stylistic, and cultural context.

2.7 Translation as a Process

Contemporary translation research increasingly conceptualizes translation as a process involving comprehension, drafting, problem-solving, revision, and evaluation. Process-oriented approaches emphasize that effective translation involves several stages rather than a single act of transferring words from one language to another. Novice translators may begin translating immediately, sometimes without reading the complete source text or identifying its communicative purpose. A more effective process involves reading and analyzing the source text, identifying potential problems, consulting appropriate resources, drafting the target text, evaluating translation decisions, and revising the final product. The original study emphasizes the importance of pre-drafting, drafting, and post-drafting or revision. This process-oriented perspective is particularly relevant to the finding that 96% of respondents considered proofreading useful for reducing translation errors. Revision should therefore be regarded as an integral component of translation rather than an optional final step. Students should be trained to examine their translations for meaning, terminology, grammar, lexical choice, cohesion, style, and cultural appropriateness.

2.8 Dictionaries, Corpora, and Translation Technologies

Reference tools can provide valuable support for translation when they are used critically. Dictionaries provide information about meanings, grammatical patterns, and usage, while corpora can help translators examine authentic collocations, terminology, and target-language patterns. However, dictionary use is not automatically beneficial. Students who simply select the first bilingual equivalent without considering context may reproduce inappropriate or literal meanings. Effective dictionary use therefore requires training in contextual interpretation and comparison of possible equivalents. The present study found that 92% of respondents believed dictionary use helps reduce translation errors. This finding supports the integration of reference skills into translation instruction.

Machine translation has introduced an additional dimension to translator education. Modern machine translation systems can assist with comprehension and drafting, but their output may contain semantic, lexical, grammatical, stylistic, or pragmatic problems. Students therefore require post-editing and critical evaluation skills rather than unrestricted reliance on automated output.

An important finding of the present study is that 70% of respondents believed machine translation could help reduce translation errors, whereas 92% agreed that machine translation sometimes produces inaccurate translations. These findings should not necessarily be viewed as contradictory. Rather, they suggest that respondents recognize both the usefulness and limitations of translation technology. The pedagogical implication is that machine translation can be introduced as a resource for learning and revision, provided that students are trained to evaluate its output, verify terminology and meaning, identify errors, and make appropriate corrections.

2.9 Error Analysis as a Pedagogical Resource

Error analysis should not be restricted to identifying what is incorrect. Its broader pedagogical value lies in determining why errors occur and how instruction can address recurring difficulties.

Translation errors may reveal weaknesses in grammar, vocabulary, syntax, semantics, cultural knowledge, terminology, and translation strategies. Teachers can use such information to design targeted activities, provide formative feedback, and encourage students to revise their work. Systematic error analysis can therefore support curriculum development and translator education. It can help teachers identify areas requiring additional practice and enable students to become more aware of their own translation decisions. In the context of the present study, the questionnaire findings provide educators' perceptions of the areas in which students experience translation difficulties. However, because the study does not directly analyze students' translation products, these perceptions should not be interpreted as evidence of the actual frequency of specific error categories. Direct examination of student translations would be necessary to establish the prevalence and characteristics of actual translation errors.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey design. This design was considered appropriate because the purpose of the study was to investigate educators' perceptions concerning translation errors among third-level English language students, including their perceived types, causes, effects, and possible pedagogical responses. It is important to clarify that the study did not involve direct linguistic analysis of student-produced translations. The data were obtained from lecturers, teachers, and translation specialists through a questionnaire. Accordingly, the findings represent the respondents' perceptions of translation difficulties associated with third-level English language students rather than objectively measured frequencies of errors in students' translation products.

3.2 Study Setting

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Education, University of Kordofan, Elobeid, Sudan. The Department of English Language provides undergraduate education in English language studies, in which translation forms an important component of students' academic and professional development. The university context provides a relevant setting for examining translation difficulties because students are expected to develop competence in both English and Arabic and to apply their linguistic knowledge to translation tasks.

3.3 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of English language lecturers, teachers, and specialists in translation at the Faculty of Education, University of Kordofan.

A sample of 50 respondents was selected through random sampling. The sample size was therefore:

N = 50

Given the relatively small sample and the fact that the study was conducted at a single institution, the findings should be interpreted as institution-specific evidence concerning educators' perceptions. They should not be generalized automatically to all English language students or universities in Sudan.

3.4 Research Instrument

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of two sections.

Section A: Demographic information concerning respondents' qualifications and professional experience.

Section B: Twenty-five statements addressing major aspects of translation errors and translation instruction. The statements covered the following areas:

1. effects of translation errors;
2. linguistic and cultural causes;
3. grammatical and lexical difficulties;
4. literal translation;
5. subject knowledge;
6. time pressure;
7. machine translation;
8. major types of translation errors;
9. omission and addition;
10. terminology;
11. readers' trust;
12. proofreading;
13. peer review;
14. dictionary use; and
15. adequacy of translation courses.

A three-point response scale was used: **(Agree, Disagree, Not Sure)**

The questionnaire was designed to obtain respondents' judgments concerning translation difficulties and pedagogical practices. Therefore, percentages presented in the Results section indicate levels of respondent agreement with particular statements.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was reviewed by specialists and supervisors to assess its clarity, relevance, linguistic accuracy, and alignment with the objectives of the study. A pilot study was also conducted as part of the instrument development and reliability procedure, and the questionnaire was revised accordingly. However, the available study documentation does not report a numerical reliability coefficient such as Cronbach's alpha. Therefore, no numerical reliability coefficient is claimed in the present article.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire was prepared in accordance with the research objectives and reviewed by specialists before being administered to the respondents. It was administered personally to the participants and subsequently collected and organized for analysis. Participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained during the data collection process.

3.7 Data Analysis

The collected responses were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The percentage was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = (\text{Frequency} / \text{Total Number of Respondents}) \times 100$$

The results were interpreted descriptively according to the research questions and objectives.

It should be emphasized that the percentages represent respondents' levels of agreement with questionnaire statements. They should therefore not be interpreted as prevalence rates showing how frequently the corresponding errors actually occur in students' translation products.

4. Results

4.1 Perceived Effects of Translation Errors

The first group of questionnaire statements examined respondents' perceptions of the effects of translation errors on translation quality and communication.

Indicator	Agree, n (%)
Translation errors affect overall translation quality	47 (94%)
Translation errors lead to misunderstanding of the original message	45 (90%)
Translation errors affect readers' trust in the translated text	44 (88%)

The results show a high level of agreement among respondents concerning the perceived consequences of translation errors. Forty-seven respondents (94%) agreed that translation errors affect the overall quality of translated texts. Forty-five respondents (90%) agreed that such errors can lead to misunderstanding of the original message, while 44 respondents (88%) indicated that translation errors may affect readers' trust in translated texts. These results suggest that educators perceive translation errors as having consequences beyond surface-level linguistic inaccuracies. In their

view, errors may interfere with the accurate communication of the source message and may consequently influence readers' confidence in the target text. Because the data were obtained through a perception-based questionnaire, these results should be understood as respondents' judgments concerning the effects of translation errors rather than as direct measurements of communication breakdown in actual student translations.

4.2 Perceived Causes of Translation Errors

The second group of statements examined factors that respondents perceived as contributing to translation errors.

Perceived Cause	Agree, n (%)
Linguistic differences between English and Arabic	46 (92%)
Weak grammatical knowledge	46 (92%)
Limited vocabulary	44 (88%)
Time pressure	44 (88%)
Cultural differences	43 (86%)
Literal translation	42 (84%)
Lack of subject knowledge	41 (82%)

Linguistic differences between English and Arabic and weak grammatical knowledge received the highest levels of agreement, with 46 respondents (92%) supporting each factor. Limited vocabulary and time pressure were each identified by 44 respondents (88%). Cultural differences were identified by 43 respondents (86%), while 42 respondents (84%) associated literal translation with translation errors. Lack of subject knowledge received the lowest, though still substantial, level of agreement in this group, with 41 respondents (82%).

The findings indicate that respondents perceive translation difficulties as multidimensional. Rather than attributing translation problems to a single cause, they identified linguistic, cultural, cognitive, and contextual factors as potentially contributing to students' difficulties.

4.3 Perceived Major Types of Translation Errors

The questionnaire also examined respondents' perceptions of the major types of translation errors.

Perceived Error Type	Agree, n (%)
Semantic errors affect meaning	47 (94%)
Lexical errors are common	45 (90%)
Terminology errors are common in technical translation	45 (90%)
Grammatical errors frequently occur	44 (88%)

Semantic errors received the highest level of agreement. Forty-seven respondents (94%) agreed that semantic errors affect the meaning of translated texts. Lexical errors and terminology errors were each identified by 45 respondents (90%), while grammatical errors were identified by 44 respondents (88%). Additional responses indicated that 92% of respondents associated omission with incomplete translation, while 84% regarded unnecessary addition as a source of translation errors.

Taken together, these findings suggest that respondents perceive translation difficulties at several levels, ranging from lexical selection and terminology to grammar and, most importantly, the preservation of source meaning. Thus these percentages should not be interpreted as evidence that semantic errors actually occur more frequently than lexical or grammatical errors in students' translations. They indicate only the relative levels of agreement among the respondents concerning the importance or occurrence of these perceived difficulties.

4.4 Perceptions of Machine Translation

The questionnaire examined respondents' views concerning the potential usefulness and limitations of machine translation.

Statement	Agree, n (%)
Machine translation helps reduce errors	35 (70%)
Machine translation sometimes produces inaccurate translations	46 (92%)

Thirty-five respondents (70%) agreed that machine translation can help reduce translation errors, while 46 respondents (92%) agreed that machine translation sometimes produces inaccurate translations. The two findings should be interpreted together. The responses indicate that a majority of educators recognize the potential usefulness of machine translation while simultaneously acknowledging its limitations.

This result suggests that machine translation may be useful as a supplementary resource, but its output should not be accepted without human evaluation. Students need to develop the ability to compare machine-generated translations with the source text, identify possible inaccuracies, verify terminology and meaning, and revise inappropriate output.

4.5 Perceived Pedagogical Interventions

The final group of results examined respondents' perceptions of strategies that may help reduce translation errors.

Pedagogical Intervention	Agree, n (%)
Proofreading reduces translation errors	48 (96%)
Translation-skills training minimizes errors	47 (94%)
Dictionary use reduces translation errors	46 (92%)
Peer review improves translation quality	44 (88%)

Existing translation courses adequately prepare students	39 (78%)
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Proofreading received the highest level of agreement, with 48 respondents (96%) considering it useful for reducing translation errors. Translation-skills training was supported by 47 respondents (94%), dictionary use by 46 respondents (92%), and peer review by 44 respondents (88%). Thirty-nine respondents (78%) agreed that existing translation courses adequately prepare students to avoid translation errors. Fourteen respondents (28%) disagreed with this statement, while the remaining respondents were uncertain. The high levels of agreement concerning proofreading, translation-skills training, dictionary use, and peer review indicate strong support among respondents for process-oriented and skills-based approaches to translation instruction. The comparatively lower level of agreement concerning the adequacy of existing translation courses may suggest that, although current courses provide a useful foundation, additional practical activities and instructional support may be required. Overall, the Results indicate that respondents perceive translation errors as a significant and multidimensional pedagogical concern. The findings highlight linguistic differences, grammatical knowledge, vocabulary, cultural awareness, literal translation, subject knowledge, and time pressure as important perceived contributing factors. They also emphasize the importance of semantic accuracy, revision, proofreading, and critical use of translation resources.

5. Discussion

The findings provide a coherent picture of how lecturers, teachers, and translation specialists perceive translation difficulties among third-level English language students at the University of Kordofan. Overall, the respondents viewed translation errors as a multidimensional problem involving linguistic, semantic, cultural, strategic, and contextual factors. This interpretation is consistent with the literature reviewed in this study, which conceptualizes translation competence as extending beyond bilingual knowledge to include cultural awareness, strategic competence, contextual interpretation, and revision skills.

5.1 Perceived Effects of Translation Errors

One of the strongest findings concerns the perceived effect of translation errors on translation quality. Ninety-four percent of respondents agreed that translation errors affect the overall quality of translated texts, while 90% agreed that such errors may lead to misunderstanding of the original message. In addition, 88% believed that translation errors affect readers' trust in translated texts. These findings support the meaning-based and communicative approaches to translation discussed by Larson (1998), Baker (2018), and Hatim and Mason (1997). From these perspectives, translation should not be understood as a mechanical transfer of linguistic forms. Rather, the translator must reproduce the intended meaning and communicative function of the source text. Consequently, an error that changes or obscures meaning may affect not only linguistic accuracy but also the communicative success of the translation. The high level of agreement concerning misunderstanding is particularly important because it indicates that

respondents perceive translation errors as potentially affecting communication rather than merely producing stylistic imperfections. This supports the argument that translation instruction should place preservation of meaning at the center of students' training. The study did not measure actual misunderstanding among readers or directly examine the effect of errors in students' translated texts. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of educators' judgments about the potential consequences of translation errors.

5.2 Linguistic Differences and Grammatical Knowledge

Linguistic differences between English and Arabic and weak grammatical knowledge received the highest levels of agreement among the perceived causes of translation errors, with 92% of respondents supporting each factor.

This finding is consistent with the literature on linguistic interference and translation competence. Because English and Arabic differ in grammatical organization, lexicalization, syntax, and discourse conventions, students may encounter difficulties when attempting to transfer meanings between the two languages. When learners rely heavily on structures familiar from their first language, they may produce target-language constructions that are inappropriate or unnatural. The finding concerning weak grammatical knowledge is also consistent with the multidimensional view of translation competence. Translation requires students to understand grammatical relationships in the source text and to reconstruct them appropriately in the target language. Insufficient grammatical knowledge may therefore interfere with both comprehension and production. The results suggest that translation courses should be supported by systematic development of English grammar and broader linguistic competence. This does not mean that translation problems can be reduced to grammar alone. Rather, grammar should be treated as one important component of a broader translation competence that also includes vocabulary, culture, strategy, and revision.

5.3 Vocabulary and Subject Knowledge

Limited vocabulary was identified by 88% of respondents as a perceived cause of translation errors, while 82% identified lack of subject knowledge. The finding concerning vocabulary supports the literature emphasizing the importance of lexical competence in translation. Larson (1998) and Baker (2018) both highlight the importance of selecting appropriate equivalents according to context. A student may know the general meaning of a word but still select an inappropriate equivalent because the word has several possible meanings or because its collocational, stylistic, or cultural use differs between English and Arabic. So vocabulary instruction in translation courses should move beyond memorization of isolated bilingual equivalents. Students need opportunities to examine words in authentic contexts, compare possible equivalents, and consider collocation, register, meaning, and communicative purpose. The relatively high percentage associated with lack of subject knowledge also indicates that translation competence involves extra-linguistic knowledge. A translator working with technical, scientific, administrative, or specialized texts needs sufficient knowledge of the subject area to

understand terminology and concepts accurately. This finding is consistent with the multidimensional models of translation competence discussed in the literature.

5.4 Cultural Differences and Literal Translation

Cultural differences were identified by 86% of respondents as a perceived cause of translation errors. The same proportion reported difficulty with translating cultural expressions. Literal translation was identified by 84% of respondents as a source of translation errors. These findings support the cultural and pragmatic perspectives presented by Hatim and Mason (1997) and Nord (1997). Translation takes place between cultures as well as between linguistic systems. Expressions may carry cultural meanings, assumptions, references, and pragmatic functions that cannot always be transferred through direct lexical substitution. The finding concerning literal translation is particularly relevant to English-Arabic translation. Students who translate word for word may preserve individual lexical items while losing the intended meaning or communicative function of the expression. This is especially problematic with idioms, collocations, metaphors, and culturally embedded expressions. The results therefore support the need for students to be trained to identify meaningful translation units and to evaluate possible equivalents according to context. Literal translation should not necessarily be prohibited, but students should learn that it is one possible strategy whose appropriateness depends on the relationship between the source and target texts.

5.5 Perceived Types of Translation Errors

Semantic errors received the highest level of agreement among the error categories examined, with 94% of respondents agreeing that semantic errors affect the meaning of translated texts. Lexical and terminology errors were each supported by 90%, while grammatical errors were supported by 88%. The prominence of semantic errors is consistent with the central role of meaning in translation theory. Larson (1998) emphasizes meaning-based translation, while Baker (2018) stresses the importance of contextual equivalence and appropriate meaning transfer. From this perspective, errors that distort source meaning are particularly serious because they can alter the message communicated by the source text. The high levels of agreement concerning lexical and terminology errors also reflect the importance of appropriate word selection and specialized knowledge. Students may understand the general topic of a text but still produce inaccurate translations because they select inappropriate lexical equivalents or lack knowledge of specialized terminology. The findings concerning omission and addition are similarly important. Ninety-two percent of respondents associated omission with incomplete translation, while 84% considered unnecessary addition to be a source of translation errors. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining informational equivalence between the source and target texts. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish between perceived importance and actual frequency. The percentages do not demonstrate that semantic errors occur more frequently than lexical or grammatical errors in students' translations. They indicate that respondents strongly perceive these categories as important or

common difficulties. Direct corpus-based analysis of student translations would be required to determine their actual frequency.

5.6 Time Pressure as a Perceived Contributing Factor

Time pressure was identified by 88% of respondents as a contributing factor to translation errors. This finding suggests that respondents perceive translation performance as being influenced not only by linguistic competence but also by contextual conditions. Translation requires comprehension, research, decision-making, drafting, and revision. When students have insufficient time, they may reduce the amount of time spent consulting dictionaries or other resources, checking terminology, reviewing meaning, and proofreading the final text. The finding therefore reinforces the process-oriented view of translation discussed earlier. Students should be trained to manage their time effectively and to develop efficient translation strategies that allow them to allocate adequate attention to comprehension, drafting, revision, and proofreading.

5.7 Machine Translation: Usefulness and Limitations

The findings concerning machine translation reveal an important balance in respondents' attitudes. Seventy percent agreed that machine translation helps reduce errors, while 92% agreed that machine translation sometimes produces inaccurate translations. Rather than viewing these findings as contradictory, they can be interpreted as evidence that respondents recognize both the potential and limitations of translation technology. Kenny (2020) discusses the growing role of machine translation in contemporary translation practice, while Bowker and Ciro (2019) emphasize the importance of understanding and critically evaluating machine-generated output.

The findings have an important pedagogical implication. Students should not simply be encouraged to use machine translation, nor should technology be completely excluded from translation education. Instead, students should be trained to use machine translation critically. This includes comparing machine-generated output with the source text, identifying semantic and grammatical problems, checking terminology, evaluating context, and post-editing the final translation. Such training would help students develop technological competence while maintaining human responsibility for translation decisions.

5.8 Proofreading, Training, Dictionary Use, and Peer Review

Proofreading received the highest level of agreement among the proposed pedagogical interventions, with 96% of respondents supporting it. Translation-skills training was supported by 94%, dictionary use by 92%, and peer review by 88%. The strong endorsement of proofreading supports process-oriented approaches to translation, which emphasize revision as an integral stage of translation. Translation is not necessarily completed when the first draft is produced. Students need to review their work systematically to identify problems in meaning, terminology, grammar, lexical choice, cohesion, style, and cultural appropriateness. The 94% agreement concerning translation-skills training indicates that respondents view translation competence as

something that can be developed through systematic instruction and practice. This corresponds with the PACTE perspective, which conceptualizes translation competence as a combination of interacting sub-competencies. The strong support for dictionary use also corresponds with the literature reviewed in this study. However, students need to be trained to use dictionaries critically. Simply selecting the first available bilingual equivalent may reproduce inappropriate meanings. Students should compare definitions, examples, collocations, grammatical information, and contextual usage.

Peer review, supported by 88% of respondents, may also contribute to students' development as independent translators. By examining and discussing classmates' translation choices, students can become more aware of alternative solutions and learn to justify their own decisions.

5.9 Perceived Adequacy of Existing Translation Courses

Seventy-eight percent of respondents agreed that existing translation courses adequately prepare students to avoid translation errors. Although this represents a clear majority, it is noticeably lower than the percentages obtained for proofreading, translation-skills training, dictionary use, and peer review. This difference may suggest that respondents recognize the value of existing translation courses while also perceiving a need for further improvement. The finding can be interpreted in relation to the broader results, which emphasize practical translation skills, revision, cultural awareness, terminology, and technology. The implication is not necessarily that current courses are inadequate. Rather, the results suggest that additional practical activities may strengthen existing provision. Translation courses could provide more opportunities for authentic translation tasks, systematic revision, peer review, terminology research, cultural analysis, and critical use of translation technologies.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated educators' perceptions of translation errors associated with third-level English language students at the University of Kordofan. The findings indicate that respondents perceive translation difficulties as substantial and multidimensional. Linguistic differences between English and Arabic and weak grammatical knowledge were the most strongly endorsed perceived causes, each receiving 92% agreement. Limited vocabulary and time pressure were also prominent, while cultural differences, literal translation, and lack of subject knowledge received substantial levels of agreement. Semantic errors were the most strongly endorsed perceived error category, followed by lexical, terminology, and grammatical errors. The findings also highlight the importance of process-oriented translation instruction. Proofreading received the highest level of support, followed by translation-skills training, dictionary use, and peer review. The responses concerning machine translation indicate that educators recognize both its usefulness and its limitations. This suggests that students should be trained not simply to use machine translation but to evaluate and post-edit its output critically. Overall, the findings support an integrated approach to translation pedagogy

that combines linguistic development, cultural and pragmatic awareness, strategic competence, authentic translation practice, revision, peer review, and responsible use of translation technologies. However, an important limitation must be emphasized. The findings are based on the perceptions of lecturers, teachers, and translation specialists. The study did not directly analyze students' translation products. Therefore, the percentages reported in this study should not be interpreted as actual prevalence rates of translation errors among students. Rather, they represent educators' assessments of the types, causes, and effects of translation difficulties. Future research should complement these perception-based findings through direct analysis of student translations.

7. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

7.1 Strengthen Linguistic and Translation Competence

Translation courses should integrate systematic development of grammar, vocabulary, syntax, semantics, discourse competence, and practical translation skills. Students should receive regular opportunities to apply these skills to authentic translation tasks.

7.2 Reduce Uncritical Word-for-Word Translation

Students should be trained to identify translation units, collocations, idioms, contextual meanings, and discourse functions. Literal translation should be taught as a possible strategy rather than as a universal method.

7.3 Integrate Cultural and Pragmatic Awareness

Translation instruction should include authentic culturally embedded texts and activities that help students recognize cultural assumptions, idiomatic meanings, pragmatic functions, and appropriate adaptation strategies.

7.4 Institutionalize Revision and Peer Review

Revision and proofreading should form explicit stages of translation assignments. Students should be encouraged to review meaning, terminology, grammar, lexical choice, cohesion, style, and cultural appropriateness. Peer review should also be used to encourage students to explain and justify their translation choices.

7.5 Develop Critical Use of Reference Tools and Machine Translation

Students should receive training in the effective use of dictionaries, corpora, and machine translation systems. Particular attention should be given to contextual verification, terminology checking, error detection, and post-editing.

7.6 Increase Authentic Translation Practice

Translation courses should expose students to a wider range of authentic texts, including literary, administrative, technical, scientific, media, and institutional materials. Such practice can help students develop flexibility and strategic competence.

8. Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted at a single institution, the University of Kordofan. Therefore, the findings should not automatically be generalized to other Sudanese universities. Second, the sample consisted of 50 respondents. Although the responses provide useful institution-specific evidence, a larger sample involving several universities would provide a stronger basis for broader conclusions. Third, and most importantly, the study relied on educators' perceptions rather than direct examination of students' translation products. Consequently, the percentages reported in this article represent respondents' levels of agreement with questionnaire statements. They should not be interpreted as measurements of the actual prevalence of particular translation errors among students. Fourth, the data were analyzed using descriptive frequencies and percentages. Further research could employ inferential statistical procedures where appropriate and could investigate relationships among relevant variables. Finally, although a pilot study was conducted as part of the questionnaire development and reliability procedure, the available study documentation does not provide a numerical reliability coefficient. Future research should report an appropriate reliability coefficient if one is calculated.

9. Directions for Future Research

Future research should complement perception-based evidence with direct empirical analysis of student translation products. A particularly valuable follow-up study would collect a corpus of English-Arabic translations produced by third-level students and classify the actual errors according to lexical, grammatical, syntactic, semantic, cultural, pragmatic, terminological, and stylistic categories.

Future studies could also employ mixed-methods designs combining:

- analysis of student translation products;
- questionnaire data from teachers and students;
- interviews with translation instructors;
- analysis of students' revision practices;
- think-aloud or screen-recording procedures; and
- comparison of human and machine-generated translations.

Comparative studies involving several Sudanese universities would also help determine whether the patterns identified at the University of Kordofan are institution-specific or reflect broader characteristics of translation education in Sudan. Such studies would provide stronger empirical evidence concerning the actual nature, frequency, causes, and development of students' translation errors.

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