

Correcting Translation Errors Pertaining to Verb Tenses and Person in Spanish: The Case of the Third-year Jordanian Students in the Spanish Language Department at Al al-Bayt University

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Abstract

Translation is one of the most significant fields in human sciences. It facilitates cross-cultural communication and introduces a variety of scientific disciplines into our community. The main objective of this study is to improve the translation between Arabic and Spanish. We therefore intend to examine the translation errors made by the Translation -2 (Arabic into Spanish) students with regard to how to translate the various tenses into Spanish and how to choose the appropriate person of the verb. In order to meet the study's objectives, we asked our students of Translation-2 to translate 27 sentences into the Spanish language (covering all tenses) so we could analyze their errors and then figure out ways to avoid them. It was discovered that most students have difficulty telling the difference between a Spanish verb in its fourth, fifth, and sixth persons. Also, we found that most students have problems with the Subjunctive tenses and the Indicative Perfect tenses as they do not precisely know the limitations between them. We propose that the Spanish teachers should concentrate on going over the different Spanish tenses with their students before commencing the translation course, and they should also pay closer attention to helping the student choose the correct person of the verb by assigning writing exercises and reviewing classes.

Keywords: *Translation, grammar, tenses, person, syntax.*

Introduction

In Jordan, there are several universities that offer Spanish courses, and two of them have a full specialization called Bachelor's degree in Spanish and English. In addition, the number of visitors from Spanish-speaking nations increases annually, necessitating the need for more translators to handle day-to-day business with the Spanish speaking community.

As instructors at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, in the last two years, we found out that many students have difficulty translating the different tenses into Spanish, they also have problems when they choose the person of the verb, thus, more research is required to address these issues and identify answers in order to raise our students' proficiency in Spanish grammar.

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

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- 1- Study and analyze the translation mistakes that Arab students commit concerning the tenses and the selection of the correct person of the verb.
- 2- Determine the causes of each mistake in order to ascertain each problem that the students are facing.
- 3- Adapt our Translation – 2 courses to the necessities and deficiencies of our students to solve them.
- 4- Add one more research to our libraries to enhance translation techniques between Spanish and Arabic.
- 5- Assist translation teachers in identifying the errors made by the students during the translation process so that they may help fix them.

Theoretical Framework

One of the most important aims that we have at the Department of Spanish Language at Al al-Bayt University is to improve the translation quality and methods between Arabic and Spanish languages so that we will provide our community with professional translators who could represent our university and transmit the meaning between both languages properly.

To achieve this purpose, we will try to find, analyze, and solve the translation mistakes that our students commit. As well as we will also propose different manners to help the Spanish translation instructors avoid these mistakes and improve our method of teaching the Arabic – Spanish Translation.

In this paper, we will focus on grammatical and syntactical errors when the student translates the different Spanish language tenses. We made an exam that consisted of 27 sentences, each one representing one case of Spanish tenses, so we covered the whole frequent tenses³.

It is important to remember that the syntactical order of words in the sentence in Arabic and Spanish are different, thus, in Arabic, the main order is to mention first the verb⁴ then the subject, and finally the object. In contrast, the Spanish syntactic order of words prefers to mention first the subject⁵ (sometimes implicit) then the verb, and finally the object. This case is the reason for many mistakes that students and translators commit when they try to transmit the meaning between both languages.

There are many studies that analyzed translation mistakes, some of them studied the cultural texts and how the translator transmits the meaning wrongly because of the lack of cultural information such as Molina Martínez (2001). On the other hand, Elgamal (2017) and Tawfiq (2000) analyzed the translation grammatical mistakes committed by arab translators in religious and literary texts. Finally, Rodríguez Paniagua (2001) studied the translation mistakes regarding the syntactical structure of the sentences, which is highly related to what we will study in this analysis but we will focus more on the use of Spanish tenses, not the syntactical structure in general.

We have witnessed a huge number of studies related to analyzing Spanish tenses frequent errors, some of them treated Arab cases, and others were related to other nations.

First of all, the study by Franco (2007) shows the case of Italian students of the Spanish language and their most common mistakes regarding Indicative/ Subjunctive Spanish

³ We did not include the following tenses because they are not used widely by Spanish-speaking people: Past Perfect (Pretérito Anterior), Simple Subjunctive Future, and Subjunctive Future Perfect.

⁴ Consult (2013, págs. 189-243).

⁵ Consult Alarcos Llorach (2000, págs. 266-274) and Al-hashimi (1935, págs. 9-26).

tenses. He found that the majority of mistakes were related to how to form the verb and especially its endings.

On the other hand, Ruiz Granados (2018) concentrated on analyzing the mistakes committed by German students: the case of Imperfect Indicative and Simple Past. The study showed too many mistakes because in German there is only one verbal form used to refer to past events and actions not two or three like Spanish. Thus, most students persons committed more mistakes regarding the Past Simple, as well as many of them used the Imperfect indicative instead of Simple Past and vice-versa.

In addition, Andrés Rubio (2015) studied the translation mistakes of the Subjunctive mode (Spanish–English). In this study, the interviewed persons expressed that they face many difficulties when translating the subjunctive mode to the English language, therefore, more studies are needed to find new methods to translate the Subjunctive mode without committing mistakes.

The study by Vallejos Bjernevik (2003) explained deeply the mistakes regarding the Present Perfect (pretérito perfecto compuesto) committed by Norwegian ELE students. This analysis showed that the most common mistakes are related to the formation of irregular Past Participle, selecting wrongly the proper tense (they chose Past Perfect instead of Simple Present), and other mistakes concerning the order of the words in the interrogative sentences, which causes many translation problems for the Norwegian students.

In our study, we will focus on the translation mistakes concerning the different Spanish tenses and how the student writes, locates, and treats the Spanish verbs in the sentence. We will analyze each sentence regarding:

- 1- Selecting the correct Spanish tense.
- 2- Writing correctly the verb form.
- 3- Maintain the proper word order in the sentence.

Methodology

As we mentioned in the introduction, we asked our students in the Translation – 2 course to translate 27 sentences within the bachelor’s degree program: Spanish and English – Language and Literature. In order to reach this course, the student must have studied the following courses previously: Introduction to Spanish Language (Intensive 1 + 2), Writing (Introduction and Advanced), Conversation and Pronunciation (Introduction and Advanced), and Advanced Spanish Grammar, in addition to Translation – 1.

At this University, within the Translation – 1 course, we teach the translation from Spanish to Arabic, but in Translation – 2, we do the opposite (from Arabic to Spanish), which indicates that we will examine the students’ level in forming the Spanish language sentence correctly with the appropriate tense. As a professor of this course for 4 years, our students always make mistakes when they deal with the translation of Spanish tenses.

Each sentence covers one case of each Spanish tense (all tenses are covered), thus, we will analyze two aspects of each mistake if it is related to correctly selecting the Spanish tense, and selecting the correct person (first, second, third etc.).

Next step will be analyzing the reason for that mistake and what led the student to make it, and finally, we try to get some conclusions in order to find solutions to avoid these mistakes and to help Spanish professors use new methods to teach Spanish translation to Arab students.

We will present separately the sentences related to each Spanish tense and then will analyze the three mentioned criteria of our study.

Analysis

First, we will mention the two sentences related to the present simple:

1- يأتي الناس إلى هنا. Ya 'ti al-nāsu ilā hunā⁶.

La gente viene aquí. People comes here.

2- تكتبون العديد من القصائد. Taktubūna al-‘adīda min al-qaṣā’id.

Escribís varios poemas. You write several poems.

With regard to selecting the correct verb tense, we found that

As we can observe, in the first sentence we use the third person. After revising the students' solutions, we found out that three students did not use the Present Simple tense, but one of them used the Present Subjunctive (*vengas, come*) and another student applied the Indicative Imperfect tense (*venían⁷, they came*). In addition, we found one case of the infinitive verb (*llegar, to arrive*).

On the other hand, we observed that one student used the fifth person in the first sentence (*venís, you come*) instead of the third one. And another student used the second person (*vengas, you come*).

With respect to the second sentence which indicates the fifth person, we see that five students applied a different tense: one of them used the Indicative Imperfect tense (*escribáis, you wrote*), another one used the Future Simple (*Escribiréis, you will write*). Also, two students used the Present Subjunctive (*escribamos/escribas, we write, you write*). Finally, one student used the Imperative (*Escriban, write*).

We are able to find out that the most student of the course did not have difficulties in dealing with the Present Simple. Sometimes they face some problems when they use the fifth person, as it does not exist in some languages like English.

The following two sentences present the Indicative Present Perfect:

3- لقد كتبنا الرسالة هذا الصباح. Laqad katabnā al-risāla hādā al-ṣabāḥ.

Hemos escrito este mensaje esta mañana. We have written this message this morning.

4- لقد عادوا إلى البقالة. Laqad ‘ādū ilā al-baqqāla.

Han vuelto al supermercado. They have come to the supermarket.

After revising the students' answers to the third sentence translation, we found that nine students did not choose the Spanish tense correctly, thus, one student used the Past Perfect⁸ (*habíamos escrito, we had written*), seven students applied the Past Simple (*escribimos/escribemos, we wrote*). In addition, one student used the Future Perfect in that context (*habríamos escrito, we will have written*). In the fourth sentence, it occurs almost the same, two student used the Past Perfect (*habían/habíamos vuelto, they/we had returned*), another one chose the Imperfect Past (*volvías, you came*) and two students used the Present Simple (*Vuelven/ volvemos, they/we come*).

It should be recalled that using the Past Simple or the Past Perfect instead of the Present Perfect is due to that in Arabic there is just one tense that indicates the past, therefore many Arab students commit this grammatical mistake.

On the other hand, one student applied the sixth person and another one used the fifth person to translate the third sentence (*habéis escrito/han escrito, you have written, they have written*). At the same time, in the fourth sentence, three students applied the fourth

⁶ We used the Arabic transcription system from the Al-Qantara journal in this study.

⁷ The student did not apply the tense correctly: *venían*.

⁸ In Spanish called Pluscuamperfecto de indicativo

person in the translation (hemos vuleto/volvemos, we have returned, we return), and two also four students used the fifth person (habéis veulto, you have returned) and one student translate it is directed to the second person (volvías, you came).

The fifth and sixth persons are always confusable for Arab students, because, as we mentioned, in some language it does not exist the fifth person, such as English.

The following two sentences indicate the translation of the Simple Past tense into Spanish:

5- شربت الماء البارحة. Šaribtu al-mā' al-bāriḥa.

Bebiste agua ayer. I drank water yesterday.

6- هل ضربنا ذلك الفتى؟ Hal ḍarabanā ḍāka alfatā?

¿Pegamos a aquel niño? Did that boy hit us?

It is worth noting that in the fifth sentence, there is a diacritical mark (◌◌) that indicates the second person, thus, if the student does not notice it, he will think that it refers to the first person, which causes confusion for the student, and it makes them translate it mistakenly. Based on that confusion, 13 students made that mistake and used the first person to translate the sentence (bebí⁹, I drank). On the other hand, just one student translated wrongly the person in the sixth sentence; he used the fifth person instead of the sixth one (bebisteis, did we hit).

With respect to choosing the correct Spanish tense, no one used other than the Simple Past in the fifth sentence, but some of them used the Present Perfect to translate the question in the sixth sentence which can be totally correct in that interrogative context.

The following two sentences represent the Indicative Imperfect tense:

7- كنت أكسر الزجاج عندما كنت طفلاً. Kunu 'aksiru alzuḡāḡ 'indamā kuntu ṭifl^{an}.

Rompía el cristal cuando era niño. I broke glass when I was a child.

8- كنتم تفوزون على خصمكم. Kuntum tafūzūna 'alā ḥaṣmikum.

Ganabais a vuestro oponente. You beat your opponent.

We found out that many students failed to translate correctly this tense. In the seventh sentence, almost nobody made a mistake translating it correctly, but we saw many mistakes in the second part; thus, three students used the Passive to translate it (era roto, was broken), and we saw also the following case (era romper, was breaking/break), another two students used the Indicative Past Perfect (había roto/rompido*, had broken) and also there was a student who used the Past Simple (rompió, broke). In addition, we found three cases of translating the sentence with the present perfect (ha roto, I have broken). Regarding the eighth sentence, two students used the present simple (ganáis/ganamos, you/we beat), and also we found a translation with the Past Simple (ganasteis, you beat), and one case using the Indicative Past Perfect (habíamos ganado, we beat).

We can observe that many students face difficulties in translating this tense, they do not precisely know its indications. In the Arabic language, there is no Past Perfect, people just use one past tense, and because of that, we can detect too many translation mistakes in this regard.

Concerning the translation of the proper person in the mentioned two sentences, we detected two cases of the fourth person (ganamos/habíamos ganado, we beat) and (había rompido*, I had broken), and only two cases of the first/third person (ganaba, I/he/she/it

⁹ Some students conjugate the verb in the following way: *bebé* which is considered a spelling mistake.

beats) and (rompió/había roto, he/she/it broke/had broken). These mistakes, as we mentioned, are due to that, in some languages, the fifth person cannot be expressed precisely by the subject, therefore, we find some mistakes when they translate it.

The following two sentences show examples of the Future Simple:

9- سأتأكلون الكعكة مع إبراهيم وسمية. Sata'kulūna al-ka'ka ma' 'ibrāhīm wa sumayya.

Comeréis/vais a comer el pastel con Ibrahim and Sumayya. You Will eat the cake with Ibraheem and Sumayya.

10- سيقوم بحل الواجبات؟ Sayaqūmu biḥal al-wāğibāt?

Hará/va a hacer los deberes He will do the homeworks.

The Future Simple is not considered a difficult tense for Arab students, because its conjugations are simple and it does not have many irregular cases. However, after reviewing the students' translations of these sentences, we found out that they made many mistakes: four students used Present Simple to translate them (coméis/comemos, you eat/we eat). In addition, another four students applied Past tenses in this context (ha solucionado/comían, he has answered/ they ate), and two students used the Simple Conditional (comerían, they would eat).

We can understand why four students used the Present Simple because in both Arabic and Spanish languages we can use the Present tense to express something that will happen in the near future, but using Past tenses in these contexts denotes that the student has some problems with the Future Simple conjugation.

On the other hand, we found out that two students used the third person in both sentences (va a comer/hacer, he will do), two student applied the second person in the sentence n. 10 (vas a hacer/solucionarás, you will do/ you will answer), and also two students used fourth person (comeremos/vamos a comido*, we will eat).

As we can observe, it is the same problem of dealing with the fifth person, the other two mistakes regarding the employment of the second person instead of the third would be due to lack of concentration.

Now, we will present the two sentences that indicate the Indicative Future Perfect:

11- سأكون قد تخرجت من الجامعة بحلول عام 2040، Biḥulūl 'ām 2040, sa'akūnu qa taḥarrağtu mina al-ğāmi'a.

En 2040, me habré graduado de la universidad. In 2040, I will have graduated from college.

12- لقد غاب كثيراً، لابد أنه ذهب ليدخن. Laqaḍ ġāba Muḥammad kaṭir^{an}, labudda 'annahu ḍahaba liyudaḥin.

Mohammad ha tardado mucho, habrá ido a fumar. Mohammad has taken a long time; he must have gone to smoke.

In the translation of these two sentences, we have just detected two mistakes regarding the person: one used the third person in the sentence n. 11 (está graduado, he is graduated), and the same student used the fifth person in the sentence n.12 (habéis vas*, you have gone).

On the other hand, the students' translations showed too many mistakes when trying to express this tense in Spanish. Thus, six students used the Future Simple to translate both sentences and especially the first one (voy a graduarme, I will graduate), which is an expected mistake as the student saw the future tense indication and thought directly that he had to use the Simple Future. The students' translations also showed four times of using the Indicative Past Perfect (había graduado/faltado, he had graduated/missed) and six times of applying the Indicative Present Perfect (he graduado/faltado, I have

graduated/missed). It looks obvious that this mistake happened due to misusing the Indicative Future Perfect, so they conjugated the verb as in the Present Perfect not the Future Perfect; it has to do with how to deal with the verb haber in the perfective tenses.

We will lead now with the two sentences that indicate the Indicative Past Perfect:

13- عندما وصل ابني، كان العامل قد تناول العشاء. 'indamā waṣala ibnī, kāna al-‘āmilu qad tanāwala al-‘ašā’.

Quando llegó mi hijo, el empleado había cenado. When my son arrived, the employee had had dinner.

14- لم أكن قد سمعت هذه الأغنية من قبل. Lam ‘akun qad sami‘tu h ādihi al-‘uġniyya min qabl!

¡No había escuchado esta canción antes! I hadn't heard this song before.

As we know, we use this tense to indicate the order of past actions, thus, when the sentence has two actions (sentence n.13), we expect that one action happened before the other one, and when the sentence has only one action (sentence n.14), the event it shows occurred before other events.

We saw that our students confused the Indicative Past Perfect with the Indicative Present Perfect, thus, regarding sentence n. 13, four students translated it with the Indicative Present Perfect (ha comido/cenado, he has eaten/he has had dinner). And in sentence n. 14, three students made the same mistake (he oído/ I have heard).

At the same time, we have detected a few cases of selecting the correct person. We just saw two cases of using the third person in sentence n. 14 (ha oído, he has heard), although they should have used the first one.

The following sentences will examine the students' translation the Present Subjunctive:

15- من الممكن أن يذهب محمد إلى الحفلة. Mina al-mumkin ‘an yaḥhaba Moḥammad ilā al-ḥafla.

Es posible que Mohammad vaya a la fiesta. It is possible that Mohommad go to the party

16- أتمنى أن نبقي سوياً. ‘atamannā ‘an nabqā sawiyy^{an}.

Espero que nos quedemos juntos. I hope we stay together.

After reviewing their translations, we observed that three students in each sentence used the infinitive form without conjugating the verbs, so they did not express the person correctly. That would be due to a lack of information concerning the Present Subjunctive conjugations. Also, one student used the second person (vas, you go), which can be a confusion between vaya and va committed by that student.

In addition, one student used the Past Simple formula (fue, he went) in the sentence n. 15, another student used the Imperfect Subjunctive (fuera, might go) and also four students used the Present Simple tense (vas/va, yo go/he goes). We also observed one case using the Indicative Imperfect Past in sentence n.15 (iba, he went) and one case of applying the Future Simple in sentence n.16 (estaremos, we will be).

Normally, Arab students face difficulties when they deal with the Subjunctive tenses, because in both English and Arabic there are no different conjugations when applying the subjunctive uses.

Now, we will observe the two sentences that represent the Present Perfect Subjunctive:

17- أتمنى أن يكون الولد قد انتصر. ‘atamannā ‘an yakūna al-waladu qad ‘intaṣara.

Espero que el chico haya triunfado. I hope the boy has triumphed.

18- بمجرد عودة محمد، سوف أغانر. Bimuğarrad 'awdat Moḥammad, sawfa 'uğādir.

We know that this tense is usually used to indicate actions in the past that have already ended and whose effects reach the present (sentence n. 17) or to talk about actions that will end in the future (sentence n. 18). Both mentioned uses have no special conjugating in Arabic language, therefore, we normally detect translation mistakes committed by our students regarding dealing with this tense.

We have seen just two mistakes regarding the person: one student mentioned (eres triunfador, you are triumphant) using the first person instead of the third one. Also, another student used the first person in the same context (truinfaré, I will triumph).

On the other hand, we observed three cases of translating mistakes by using the Indicative Present Perfect in sentence n. 17 (ha triunfado/ganado, he has won/triumphed). Also, one student used the Past Simple in sentence n. 18 (volvió, he came back) and two students applied the Future in the same sentence (volverá, he will come back).

As we have mentioned, they are expected mistakes that normally Arab students and translators commit due to the absence of any special conjugations in either Arabic or English when dealing with the Present Perfect Subjunctive uses.

The following two sentences represent the Imperfect Subjunctive:

19- أردت أن تضرب الرجل. 'araddtu 'an taḍriba al-rağul.

Quería que pegaras al hombre. I wanted you to hit the man.

20- لو كان لدي سيارة، لأوصلتك إلى المنزل. Law kāna ladayya sayyāra, la'awšaltuka ilā al-manzil.

Si tuviera un coche, te llevaría a casa. If I had a car, I would take you home.

For our students, this is one of the difficult tenses because, in order to express it, we need to do no special conjugations in the Arabic language, but in Spanish, there are many irregular cases that would make it harder for our translators.

We have detected some mistakes regarding the person: in the sentence n. 19, one student put the tense in the infinitive form (pegar, to hit). And in the sentence n. 20, one student used the second person to conjugate the verb tener (tuvieras, you had) instead of the first person form tuviera/tuviere. In addition, one student used the third person in the sentence n. 20 (tienes, you have).

On the other side, we have founded many mistakes with respect to selecting the correct Spanish tense when translating the Imperfect Subjunctive, thus, two students used the Present Simple in the sentence n. 19 (pegas, you hit), and also five student used the same tense in sentence n. 20 (tengo, I have).

In addition, one of our students applied the Past Perfect Subjunctive¹⁰ (hubieses pagado*, you would have hit*). This is one of the most common mistakes when the translator confuses the Imperfect Subjunctive with the Past Perfect Subjunctive because they have some similar uses.

With regard to the Imperative tense, we presented these two sentences in the students' exam, one of them is an affirmative case and the second one is a negative one:

21- اكتبوا مع الأستاذ. Uktubū ma' al-ustād.

Escribid con el profesor. Write with the professor.

22- لا تصرف مال أخيك. Lā taşrif mala 'aḥīka.

¹⁰ In Spanish it is called *Pluscuamperfecto de subjuntivo*.

No gastes el dinero de tu hermano. Don't spend your brother's money.

It should be recalled that in the English language, we use no different conjugations to express the imperative, we use usually the Present Simple. In Arabic, the imperative is the simplest tense, and normally the students face no problem when they use it. Therefore, they find difficulties when expressing the Spanish Imperative.

Regarding the use of different persons in the last two sentences, we have found that 4 students used the fourth person (escribimos, we wrote), and one student applied the first person (gasto, I pay). These translation mistakes are likely due to a lack of information about the conjugation of the Spanish Imperative.

Concerning the use of the correct tense, we have detected many mistakes. First of all, eight students used the Present Simple tense, which is a clear confusion with the norm in the Arabic language. In addition, 3 students applied the Indicative Imperfect Past mistakenly (escribais*, you wrote). Therefore, one-third of the students translated the last two sentences incorrectly, which obligates us to concentrate more on how to teach this tense to Arab students and translators.

Now, we will deal with the two sentences that indicate the Passive in Spanish:

23- سُرق المنزل من قبل الولد. Suriqa al-manzil min qibali alwalad.

La casa fue robada por el niño. The house was robbed by the boy.

24- الباب مفتوح. Al-bābu maftūh.

La puerta está abierta. The door is opened.

The formation of the passive in English, Arabic, and Spanish is relatively similar. Because of that, normally our students do not face many difficulties when translating it into Spanish.

We found that 4 students translated the two sentences without mentioning the verbs ser and star (to be). That is a confusion with the Arabic grammar because, in the Arabic phrase, we do not mention the verb yakūn (to be) in the passive.

In addition, three students used the Present and Past Simple to translate both sentences; that normally happens when the translator or the student does not realize that the sentence is passive, therefore, he translates it as a normal sentence.

Concerning the Past Perfect Subjunctive, we presented the following sentence in the translation exam:

25- لو كنت قد رأيت الرسالة، لكنت قد أتيت إلى الحفلة. Law kuntu qad ra'aytu al-risāla, lakuntu qad 'ataitu ilā al-ḥaflah.

Si hubiera visto el mensaje, habría venido a la fiesta.

It should be recalled that in the Past Perfect Subjunctive, we use the conditional perfect in the second part of the sentence. This is considered one of the most difficult Spanish tenses for Arab students, they do not have it in their language and it implies that the student has to use two perfect tenses, one of them follows the subjunctive mode.

We found out that some students did not translate the sentence and they left it blank. Two students used the Present Perfect in both parts of the sentence (he visto/venido, I have seen/come). And one student applies the Present Perfect Subjunctive (haya visto/venido, have been seen/come).

We have not found any mistake regarding the person, it can be due to that normally they do not face difficulties with respect to expressing the first person.

Finally, we present the two following sentences that indicate the Simple Conditional tense:

26- هل يمكنك أن تعطيني القليل من الماء لو سمحت؟ Hal yumkinuka 'an tu'tiyanī al-qalīla mina al-sukkar.

¿Podrías darme un poco de agua, por favor? Could you give me some water, please?

27- نصيحتي: عليك أن تدرس جيداً. Naṣīḥṭī: 'alaika 'an tadrusa ḡayyid^{an}.

Mi consejo: deberías estudiar bien. My advise: you should study well.

We should always remember that the best translation would be by using the Simple Conditional, but it will not be considered grammatically incorrect if the translator uses the Present Simple for example.

We found that some students used the Imperative in the first context, they may think that it could transmit the same meaning: (Dame, give me). Also, four students used the Present Simple in the same sentence (Puedes darme, can you give me). In this case, they do not realize the courtesy level of the context.

We did not detect any mistake regarding the selection of the person in either sentence, in addition, a few students left the last sentence blank, but the majority could translate correctly using the Simple Conditional with the verb deberías (you should).

Conclusions

After analyzing the translation errors committed by our students regarding the Spanish tenses and selecting the correct person of the verb, we realized that our students face too many problems concerning the differentiation of the tenses, they were able to translate all sentences provided in the exam, but many times they chose the wrong tense.

Also, we conclude that our students face many difficulties in the three subjunctive tenses, they do not differentiate well between them, and in some contexts, they mix too of them or they just put the verb in the infinitive form as a sign of not knowing how to lead with sentence tense.

We conclude as well that they have confusion between the affirmative and negative imperative in Spanish, and they do not differentiate well between the tense of the two actions in the Indicative Past Perfect.

In addition, we conclude that there is a serious problem in differentiating between the fourth, fifth, and sixth persons of the verbs, our students in many contexts made mistakes and confused the three mentioned persons. This indicates a need to explain deeply the difference between them by providing many examples of translation to help our students avoid these errors.

We found the causes of each difficulty, in many times the mistakes are due to depending on the mother language or comparing to the English language, thus they did not translate correctly the cases that only exist in Spanish grammar (such as the special conjugations of subjunctive tenses). In other cases, they mix between two or more tenses, thus the student knows that he deals with the Indicative Past Perfect, but he puts the verb haber as in the Present Perfect Subjunctive (haya).

In order to solve, correct, and avoid these challenges, we suggest that our students should take a revision of the whole Spanish tenses before commencing the Translation – 2 course, therefore, they will be more prepared for the Arabic–Spanish translation. In addition, Spanish language professors should provide more exercises in class that would help to avoid the difficulties regarding the person of the verb, which will help the students to separate the system of their mother language from the Spanish system.

We also suggest that Spanish teachers change the content of this course based on our findings in order to enhance and improve the translation methods between Arabic and

Spanish languages, and to provide our community with professional translators who can represent their country in the best way.

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