Ways and Difficulties of Translating Auxiliaries, Interrogatives, and Negatives into Kurdish

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Abstract—Undoubtedly, translating auxiliaries, interrogatives, and negatives from English to Kurdish are not an easy task, as most people think so. Both languages have different patterns and various word orders, so different difficulties rise up when one translates the above word forms. This paper attempts to present the ways of translating the above word forms. Besides, it tries to show the difficulties of translating them. This paper demonstrates the problem that a translator faces when translating the above word forms. Moreover, it tackles each word form separately in both languages.

Index Terms—Auxiliaries, Modals, Negation, Questions, Verb be, Verb do, Verb have.

I. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Definitions of Translation

Since there are several theories of translation, it can be defined in several ways:

Translation is “the process of transferring meaning and form from one language, known as the source language, into another language, known as the target language” (Uzeri and Rasul, 2018, p. 9).

Moreover, it is translated by Ghazala (1995, p. 1) as follows:

“Translation is generally used to refer to all the processes and methods used to transfer the meaning of the source language text into the target language.”

Moreover, a rendering from one language into another (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/translation), it is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. Common sense tells us that this ought to be simple, as one ought to be able to say something as well in one language as in another. On the other hand, you may see it as complicated, artificial and fraudulent, since using another language, you are pretending to be someone you are not (Newmark, 1988, p. 5).

Translation is a phenomenon that has a huge effect on everyday life.

(Hatim and Munday, 2004, p. 3)

B. Types of Translation

Depending on the different theories of translation, there could be several types of translation that can be summarized in the following two main types (Lawrence and M’uaz, 2002):

1. Literal translation
2. Free translation.

Literal translation

Is that type of translation which does not regard the word order of the target language. It involves a literal rendition of a text from the source language into the target language.

(Uzeri and Rasul, 2018, p. 13)

Moreover, Ghazala (1995, p. 5) divides literal translation into three types which are word for word translation, in which each source language word is translated into an equivalent word in target language. The second type of literal translation is one-to-one literal translation which is concerned with translating each source language word into an identical word and phrase in the target language. The third type is literal translation of meaning; it is the translation of meaning in context and takes into consideration the grammar and word order of the target language.

Free translation

It is another type of translation that reproduces the general meaning of the original text. It does not necessarily follow the form of the source language.

Free translation is extremely target language oriented (Uzeri and Rasul, 2018, p. 14).

Following this type of translation, the translator translates freely without any limitations. Here, translation depends on the translator’s understanding.

On the other hand, Uzeri and Rasul (2018, p. 11) divided translation into three other types which are as follows:

1. Interlingual translation or rewording which is concerned with presenting the meaning in some other words or signs in the same language
2. Interlingual translation or translation proper: This is interpreting verbal signs by means of some other language
3. Intersemiotic translation or transmutation that is interpreting the verbal signs by means of non-verbal sign system.

In spite of the previous types, https://www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/84903/11/11_chapter-2.pdf mentioned some other types of translation which are as follows:
1. Faithful translation: Attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the target language grammatical structures. It “transfers” cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical “abnormality” in the translation.
2. Semantic translation: It takes more account of the esthetic value of the source language text, compromising on the “meaning” where appropriate so that no assonance, word play, or repetition jars in the finished version.
3. Adaptation: It is a form of translation. It is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters, and plots are usually preserved, the source language culture converted to the target language culture and the text is rewritten.
4. Idiomatic translation: Idiomatic translation reproduces the “message” of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original.
5. Communicative translation: Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the reader.

C. Previous Studies

Regarding the previous studies concerning the subject of the paper Hiwa and Jawad (2019, pp. 297-309) under the title of an investigation into the problems of translating English modal auxiliary verbs as used by Kurdish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners published a paper. The study used 4th year students in the English department at the university level as a modal. The study concluded that modal auxiliary verbs in English and their shades of meaning bring serious difficulties for Kurdish EFL learners.

D. Translating from English into Kurdish

Whereas translating from English into Kurdish, one may face several difficulties; this is due to the systemic differences between English and Kurdish.

One of the basic systemic differences is in sentence structure since the Kurdish basic sentence structure is subject-object-verb, whereas the English sentence structure is subject-verb-object which means that in Kurdish, the verb follows the object, whereas in English, the verb precedes the object, so when the translator translates a sentence from English to Kurdish he has to keep that in mind (Ahmed, 1988, p. 52).

Another systemic difference between the two languages can be found in tense. In Kurdish, present simple and present progressive sound the same, whereas these two tenses are quite different in English; thus, the translator may face difficulty when he translates a present progressive and present simple sentences into Kurdish, such as (Rasul, 2006, p. 27):

I go to university by bus. دەچم بۆ زانکۆ بە پاس
I am going to the university by bus. دەچم بۆ زانکۆ بە پاس

There are many other difficulties that may be faced while translating from English to Kurdish. In this paper the difficulties that are faced while translating auxiliaries, questions, and negation will be clarified.

II. Translation of Auxiliaries

Translating auxiliaries from English to Kurdish can be regarded as a difficult task since English language contains several auxiliaries, whereas in Kurdish, there are three auxiliaries which are for present and for past (Muhammed, 1976, p. 146) (Quirk et al, 1985, p. 175).

A. Translation of Verb be

The verb be is used in several situations such as in the present progressive sentences. When translating such sentences into Kurdish, the verb be is dropped out, for example:

1. I am eating pizza. من پیزا دەخۆی
2. You are eating pizza. تۆ پیزا دەخۆی
3. She is eating pizza. یەو پیزا دەخۆی

In the above English sentences, the auxiliaries (am, are, and is) are forms of verb be which do not appear in their Kurdish equivalents.

4. A letter is written. نامەیەک دەنووسرێت

On the other hand, when (is) is followed by an adjective in English, it is translated to (ەل) in Kurdish such as:

5. Kurdistan is beautiful. کوردستان جوانە

Here, in the Kurdish equivalent of sentence (5), (ەل) in the word (ژووتە) is regarded as an auxiliary although there is not any other verb in the sentence, still in Kurdish, it is regarded as an auxiliary, whereas (is) in the English (Kurdistan is beautiful) is regarded as the main verb of the sentence.

In translating the past forms of verb “be” (was, were) when used as main verbs, are translated into Kurdish using the Turkish auxiliary بە:

6. The girl was elegant. کەچەکە رەکەکۆش بەوە
7. The swimmers were fast. مەلەوانەکان خێرا بوون

In sentence (6), (بە) is an auxiliary which indicates singularity and (بەوە) in sentence (7) is an auxiliary which indicates plurality.

On the other hand, when they are used in past progressive sentences, the verb “be” is not translated into Kurdish, as in:

8. He was writing the research. نامەوەیەکەی دەنووستی توێژینەوەکەیی
9. She was preparing food. تەوە خواردنی نامادەکەیی

In past passive voice, also, the auxiliaries (was, were) cannot be translated into Kurdish except in some cases, such as:

10. The food was eaten. خواردەکەی خوار
11. The keys were lost. کێلەکان بەر بەوەن

In sentence (10), there is no auxiliary in the translated sentence, but in sentence (11), the auxiliary (was) is translated into (بەوە) which is also an auxiliary in Kurdish.

This means that the above two sentences are translated differently, this is because in (10), there is no auxiliary, whereas

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in (11), the verb is (پێژر بەرەوە) which consists of two parts (پێژر) and (بەرەوە); in this case, it can be said that (بەرەوە) is used as an auxiliary to help the other parts to complete its meaning.

Moreover, the verb (بەرەوە) which is used in some cases in English does not have an equivalent in Kurdish, but sometimes it can be translated to Kurdish as (بەرەوە), especially when (بەرەوە) is used in past perfect (بەرەوە بەرەوە) in English do, as in:

12. The letter had been written. 

Here, it can be said that (بەرەوە) is translated to (بەرەوە).

13. She had been late. 

14. She has been late. 

On the other hand, when (be) is used as the full verb in a sentence, it can also be translated into Kurdish, as in:

15. He will be here. 

16. You can be my translator. 

17. You must be in the university now. 

In sentence (15), the word (be) is translated to (بەڵێ دەیکەم) a Kurdish auxiliary used for future, in sentence (16), the word (be) is translated into (ئەوەی پێم بکرێ دەیکەم) which consists of an auxiliary plus second person pronoun (you), and in sentence (17), the word (be) is translated to (ئەوەی کەوتوو) in Kurdish.

B. Translating Verb “Do”

Another problem of translation is translating the auxiliary verb “do.” In English language, “do” can be used to form negative, but it does not appear when it is translated into Kurdish, that is, it cannot be translated. Instead, the negative particle (نە) is used in Kurdish.

18. She does not speak English. 

19. They do not agree with me. 

20. We did not go there. 

Do is used to form interrogative sentences when there is no auxiliary in the sentence, but it also does not appear or sometimes it can be translated as (aya), as in:

21. Do you play piano? 

When “do” is used as a substitute verb, it could be translated using the main verb in Kurdish, as in:

22. Do you like tea? 

Yes, I do. 

23. Did he wait for him? 

No, he did not. 

It can be noted that sometimes the particle (کردن) (do) can be used as a translated form of “do” esp. when it is a part of the main verb in the sentence; as in:

24. Do you wait for him? 

Yes, I do. 

Here, in sentence (24), (کردن) which is derived from (کردن) is used as a translated form of (do) is a part of the main verb of the sentence or sometimes a part of the verb can be used in Kurdish esp. when the Kurdish verb is a compound word.

25. Do you swear? 

Yes, I do. 

Here refers to (سەوەن دەچێتەوە) which is object of the sentence and is the verb of the sentence.

Furthermore, when (do) is used as a main verb in the sentence, it can be translated to (کردن) as in: 

26. I will do my best. 

27. He does his homework. 

On the other hand, when (do) is used as an emphatic form to emphasize the main verb in the sentence, it could be replaced by some expressions like in Kurdish to indicate that the action is emphasized.

28. He does write the research. 

Here, in the Kurdish version, the expression (هەیە دەلینامێ) is used to emphasize on the action.

C. Translating of Verb “Have”

What have been mentioned about verbs to (be) and verbs to (do) can also apply to verbs to (have).

When (have) is used as an auxiliary, it could be translated as follows:

29. She has painted the room. 

Since verb (have) indicates the grammatical function in English so it sometimes should be expressed in Kurdish, whereas translating as in past perfect (had + p.p), this can be expressed in Kurdish as (بەرەوە بەرەوە) to show that the sentence is in past perfect or (بەرەوە بەرەوە) in Kurdish.

30. She had painted the room. 

When (have) is used as the main verb in the sentence, one should be careful that this verb has many meanings so the translator should understand the meaning first then translate it according to its meaning in the sentence.

31. She has a car. 

32. They have lunch at 12:00. 

33. She has the medicine on time. 

There are no modals in Kurdish. Whereas translating English modals to Kurdish, verbs and verb particles are used to show their translation.

For translating will, would, and shall, the verb particle (دە) is used to show their futurity.

40. They will bring the data show. 

41. They may read. 

42. They may read. 

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40. They will bring the data show. 

41. They may read. 

42. They may read. 

This means that although they are different in English, they are translated the same in Kurdish.

43. You might go on a picnic. 

D. Translation of Modals

Modals in English are can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must, and ought to.

There are no modals in Kurdish. Whereas translating English modals to Kurdish, verbs and verb particles are used to show their translation.

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41. They may read. 

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Another problem will occurred, whereas translating (can, may) in English, as they are used slightly differently, both of them will be translated as the following:

41. They can read. 

42. They can read. 

This means that although they are different in English, they are translated the same in Kurdish.

This means that (can, may) in the previous sentences are used to mean ability while sometimes may is used to mean possibility in this case the translation in Kurdish will be (وەئایا) and (وەئایا) respectively.

43. You might go on a picnic.
Moreover, (might, could, would) are also sometimes used in present tense to refer to possibility in this case, they are translated as ((نەوانەتەوە ئەنجام بەرەیەت)).

44. You might go to work. (ئەوان كارەکە ئەچەوەیە)

Concerning “must” can be translated as (دەبێت بخوێنەوە), since it is used for obligation.

45. They must read. (دەبێت نەخستەوە)

(Must) can also use to draw conclusions, as in:

46. He looked sad. (ئەمە مەلینەوە جاریکە تەنی.)

47. He must have heard bad news. (ئەو غەمانەکەی گەوێت وەئێ.)

The translation of “should” also will be (ئەوان کەی دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە) since it is used for necessity in English.

48. You should do your homework. (ئەو ئۆتەمبیلی نییە ئەو خانوەکەی بەدەیت).

One may face many problems in translating modals since they have different meanings and their meanings depend on the context so one may be very careful in understanding their meanings and translating them.

E. Translation of Questions

In translating English questions to Kurdish, some problems will occur esp. in word order. English yes/no questions are formed through subject-verb conversion when auxiliaries are present, and using do/does/did when auxiliaries are not present.

Translating these types of questions will be confusing since there is no subject-verb conversion in Kurdish, instead the word (نا) is used in Kurdish yes/no questions with disappearing the auxiliaries as in:

49. Do you have a car? (ئەوان کارکەن ئەوان کارناکەن)

Sometimes, the statements are used with the falling-raising intonation to refer to the translation of English yes/no questions.

(ئەوان سەیارەت هەیە؟)

This sentence can be distinguished from a statement through intonation in speaking and question mark in writing.

Moreover, in translating wh- questions (that is, those interrogative sentences that are formed from wh-question), the case is different. It is to be noted that why means (بەکەی) (چی), who means (کەی) (گۆڕی), whose means (گەی) (گەی), whose means (قەوە) (چو), and how means (قەوە) (چو).

As mentioned above, in Kurdish, there is no subject-verb conversion when forming questions and the auxiliaries disappear, besides, the position of the question word is after the subject or in the position of the word asked about.

Such as:

50. When do you go to the seminar tomorrow? (ئۆتەمبیلی نییە ئەو ئۆتەمبیلی؟ ئەوان کەی دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە؟)

Here, when the English sentence (48) is translated into Kurdish, the word (ئەوان کەی دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە؟) is used instead of which means that (ئەوان کەی دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە؟)

This means that (ئەوان کەی دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە؟) is used to ask about the time which is بەبایەنی.

Furthermore, the position of the adverb of time differs. In Kurdish, it is placed at the beginning, whereas in English, it comes at the end of the sentence, as in (51).

F. Translation of Negation

The words that are used to represent negation in Kurdish are as follows:

Not never (نا، نە، نییە، هەرگیز، نە)

Neither nor (نە، نە)

In English, (not) can be translated in several ways into Kurdish since the negative words as (نا، نە، نییە، هەرگیز، نە) can be used in Kurdish in negating sentences such as:

52. He has no car. (ئەوان کارکەن)

53. She will not study. (ئەوان خانوەکەی بەدەیت)

54. She is not studying. (ئەوان خانوەکەی بەدەیت)

55. The solution is not convenient. (چاڕ سەرەکە نەگەنەوە)

Hence, translating negative sentences are not easy since it is very important to keep the tense of the sentences, thus:

56. She is not reading. (ئەوان خانوەکەی بەدەیت)

57. She was not reading. (ئەوان خانوەکەی بەدەیت)

58. She has no house. (ئەوان خانوەکەی بەدەیت)

59. She did not have a house. (ئەوان خانوەکەی بەدەیت)

On the other hand, (do not, does not, and did not) they may cause difficulty in translation since (do and does) are translated in the same way, as in:

60. She does not work. (ئەوان کارکەن)

61. They do not work. (ئەوان کارناکەن)

Whereas (did not) can be translated differently, since it refers to the past:

62. She did not work. (ئەوان کارکەن)

This indicates that in Kurdish (نا) is mostly used with present verbs, whereas (نە) is used with past verbs.

Another difficulty which most of translators may face is translating sentences that contain (never), since (never) is a way to construct negative sentences.

Here, when it is translated into Kurdish, it is translated using two words expressions (نا) or (هەرگیز، نە) (ەمە مەلینەوە جاریکە تر).

Such as:

63. They never apply this rule. (ئەوان بۆ سیمینارەکە)

64. Never say this again. (ئەوان کەی دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە)

65. He never broke her heart. (ئەوان هەرگیز دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە)

Furthermore, the use of negative words such as (نه…….. نە) in English can be translated into (ئەوان کەی دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە) in Kurdish, such as:

66. Neither the blue nor the red is available. (ئەوان کەی دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە)

(No) in English is sometimes translated to (نا) in Kurdish such as:

67. No to corruption. (نە ڕەنگ شینەکە نە ڕەنگ سورەکە دەست دەکەوێت)

68. No smoking. (ئەوان کەی دەچیت بۆ سیمینارەکە)

III. Conclusions

This study comes up with some conclusions that are listed below:

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- The verb *be* disappears when it is translated to Kurdish as in present progressive, present simple passive, and past progressive.
- The verb *be* is treated as a main verb, especially in present simple form, but it is viewed as an auxiliary when it is translated to Kurdish (*بیوش*). The same case applies on (was) and (were).
- In the translation of past passive voice, the auxiliaries (was) and (were) are regarded as auxiliary Kurdish verb, and they are leaved out in others.
- The English auxiliary verb (been) is translated into a Kurdish auxiliary verb (*بوو*), and it disappears in other sentences. The same Kurdish verb (*بوو*) can be translated to (had been) as in past perfect tense.
- The auxiliary verb (do) has no equivalent in Kurdish when it is used in negative and interrogative sentences, but in some case, the Kurdish word (*نَّانِیا* (ناییا)) is used to mean it.
- The Kurdish speaker faces difficulties in translating the verb (do) when it is used to emphasize the main verb, and the Kurdish word (*بە دڵنیایەوە*) refers to it.
- The auxiliary verb (have) is translated to Kurdish auxiliary verb (*بوو*), whereas the main verb (have) can have various meanings. Thus, a Kurdish speaker must be careful in translation it to Kurdish.
- There is no modal in Kurdish, so the verb particle (*ەد*) is added to the main verb to refer to futurity.
- The modal verb (can) has different meaning in English, but it has only one in Kurdish.
- The translator should be very careful in translating modals because each has a distinct meaning, and they express gradable possibility and obligation.
- In general, Kurdish and English have different word order, so translating tag questions are confusing because there is no subject verb conversion. Thus, the word (*ەنَّام* (نام)) is used and the auxiliary disappears.
- The negative word (not) has various forms in Kurdish, so the translator should trace the tense of the sentence.
- The words (do not) and (does not) have the same translation, so the translator should be familiar with both languages.
- The word (never) causes another problem in translating negatives. It is translated to two words in Kurdish, and these two words are written in different positions in a sentence.

**References**


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