The challenges of translating English compounds into Arabic - for better or for worse.

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Abstract

This paper examines the main challenges of translating English compounds into Arabic. Compounding is linguistically a common process across many languages where compounds are frequently formed. In English compounding is highly creative and innovative, and often used as a means of introducing new phrases or coining new words into the lexicon. In contrast, Arabic is less resourceful. Arabic does not possess similar multiword expressions as an integral linguistic mechanism that merges language items to form a unit of language that can be broken down into single words and display idiosyncratic features. (Sag et al.2002). As the English text-writer and the Arabic translator use their respective languages from different mental pictures and from disparate thought processes, each operates from a different worldview, so transferring English compounds often leads to loss of meaning. Understanding and interpreting compounds has been a long-standing area of interest in Indo-European language research but remains under-researched in Arabic. This paper contributes to the debate on how to deal with English compounds in Arabic.

1. Overview of the compound mechanism

Compounding as a research area has generated a broad literature involving a number of debates and providing interesting insights about multiword expressions, inflections, derivation, complex word formation and compound words, and in terms of internal structure of compounds, decomposition, compositional mechanisms (Gagné 2002; Downing, 1977; Bauer, 1983, 2008; Spencer, 1991, Sandra, 1990, Warren, 1978, (Sag et

al.,2002; Kim, 2008, Libben 1988, 205 among others). For instance Libben (2005) points out that compounding has been and still is an area of research worth undertaking for anyone interested in morphological processing because compounding across languages is one of the most widely used derivational processes. Libben (2005) suggests a compound framework involving lexical processing based on the principle of 'maximization of opportunity'. According to this model, compounds may be processed either in their full word representation, or by focusing on each component constituent. Libben (2005) argues that this system provides the best chance and most effective approach of interpreting and understanding novel compounds.

Similarly Dressler (2005) echoes and supports the view that compounding is widespread and common across linguistic processes and novel compounds can easily be constructed. Dressler (2005) classifies compounds into two types, based on the semantic properties of the head, as exocentric and endocentric compounds. Endocentric compounds have their heads within the compound itself, such as *'Bluetooth*', while the heads of exocentric compounds must be inferred e.g. *'hard headed.*

On the other hand, Jerema's (2005) study is particularly pertinent to this present paper as it stresses the need for a multilingual approach to achieve a full understanding of compounds. Jerema (2005) indicates that compound information processing is best achieved through analysing and finding out how compounds operate across a variety of languages.

Despite the different nuances in meaning and scale of variations in the range of arguments put forward, and the empirical data presented, there is a general consensus that:

a)   A compound is a lexical unit that consists of two or more elements. The aim of combining two or more words is to convey a specific communicative purpose or transmit a precise meaning that is not as plainly or clearly conveyed by single separate words. Compound words may be hyphenated, written open (as separate words), e.g. *a major -clean-up operation is needed in sport,* or written solid (closed). e.g. *malnourished*

b) Compounds can be found in most languages with varying frequencies.

c)   Compounding is a creative word formation mechanism.

d) The meaning of compounds must be inferred from the constituents in their context of occurrence e.g. during the Tour de France, *'performance-enhancing drugs' were used*

2. English/ Arabic underpinning compound mechanisms

In order to gain a better grasp of how English and Arabic compounds work, this section of the paper highlights the differences between the two systems. English and Arabic compounds are asymmetrical. This may be due to the difference in the morphological origin of the two languages; Arabic is Semitic and English is a Indo-European language. This study aims at clarifying the morphological symmetries and asymmetries between the two languages. It begins with a definition of the compounding words and the semantic and syntactic relationship between the parts of such compounding words. This is followed by the semantic and morphological types of compounds in English. The study then turns to compounding in Arabic. The paper ends with having some suggestions for translating or teaching English compounds.

2.1 Types and forms of compounding in English

The literature on classifying and categorising compounds is diverse and often inconsistent. Some of these types and forms are highlighted as follows:

2.1.1 The components of the compounding words.
English primary and secondary compounds can be formed in a variety of ways: two nouns, a verb followed by a noun, a noun followed by a verb, a verb and a preposition, an adjective and a noun. In English, compound nouns are the most common, verb compounds are not quite so common. Compounds will be described in terms of the word class to which the source items belong.

2.1. 2 Primary Compounds.
In a primary compound or a base compound, no derivational affix is involved and two bases (derivationally bound forms) are joined together (with or without some meaningless connecting element). Most examples occur in the English learned Greco-Latin vocabulary (Hall 1992). These elements, usually Greek or Latin in origin, are termed as combining forms in the Oxford English Dictionary. These combining forms are treated as affixes because they are sometimes added to lexemes just like any other affix. English primary

compounds are formed from a large number of Greek and Latin bases, e.g. *cardiovascular, subway,* appendicitis*, autobiography, television, photograph, electrocardiogram. pathology, automatic.*

2.1.3. Secondary Compounds

In a secondary compound or stem-compound, no derivational affix is involved, and the constituents of a derived stem are simply juxtaposed and both or all of the constituents of the compound are stems. English has at least one fairly widespread type of stem compound, in combinations of noun plus verb such as baby-sit. Many derived forms are very complex, involving two or more layers of derivation. (Hall, 1992). English secondary compounds are formed in a variety of ways: two nouns; a verb followed by a noun; a noun followed by a verb; a verb and a preposition; an adjective and a noun. Compound nouns are the most common, whereas verb compounds are not quite so common. English compounds will be classified (described) on the basis of the function they play in a sentence as nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs. The sub-classification of compounds will be done by the form of the items that make up the compound (the word class to which the source items belong), because this classification will help to focus on the semantic relationships within each of the categories provided. Compounds will be classified into compound nouns, compound verbs, compound adjectives and compound adverbs. Each type of compound consists of a variety of components. The meaning of a secondary compound cannot generally be understood from the meaning of its parts, and this is semantically referred to as an exocentric compound. (Bauer, 1988)

Compound nouns may consist of the following:
The first element of a compound can be:

      1a. a noun, e.g. armchair.
        b. a pronoun, e.g. he goat.
        c. an adjective, e.g. blackboard.
        d. a verb, e.g. drawbridge.

The second element of a compound noun can be:

      2a. a noun, e.g. goldsmith.
        b. a pronoun, e.g. overall.
        c. a verb or verb stem, e.g. smash-and-grab, chimney-sweep.
        d. an adverb, e.g. passer-by, fly-over.

2. Syntactic relation of elements of compounds.

There are syntactic relations between the two elements of the compound words. Consider:

3a. syntactic word group relations e.g. part of speech, son-in-law, good-for-nothing.

b. co-ordination, e.g. bread and butter, gin and tonic.

c. verb and object or adjunct, e.g. cease-fire.

d. qualifier and noun, e.g. blackbird, bluebell.

e. adverb and verb, e.g. downpour, outlay.

f. adverb and noun, e.g. outpost.

g. the first element may denote the subject, e.g. daybreak.

h. the first element may denote the object, e.g. bloodshed.

2.1. Semantic relation of elements of compounds

There is also a semantic relationship between the two elements of compound words (the first element is the main concept):

a. The first element denotes place or time, e.g. headache, nightclub.

b. The first element denotes purpose, e.g. teacup.

c. The first element denotes means or instrument, e.g. handwriting, sword-cut.

d. The first element denotes resemblance, e.g. goldfish.

e. The first element denotes sex, e.g. manservant.

Other kinds of relations can be detected in such words as newspaper, rainbow, and motorcar.

2.3 Semantic types of compounds

Generally, the meaning of a compound noun is a specialisation of the meaning of its head. The modifier limits the meaning of the head. This is most obvious in *descriptive* compounds, also known as *endocentric* compounds, in which the modifier is used in an attributive or appositional manner. For instance, a *blackboard* is a particular kind of board which is black.

In *determinative* compounds, however, the relationship is not attributive. For example, a *footstool* is not a particular type of stool that is like a foot. Rather, it is a *stool for one's foot or feet.* (It can be used for sitting on, but that is not its primary purpose.) In a similar manner, the *office manager* is the manager of an office, an *armchair* is a *chair with arms*, and a *raincoat* is a *coat against the rain.* These relationships, which are expressed by prepositions in English, would be expressed by grammatical case in other languages. Compounds of this type are also known as *exocentric* compounds.

These two types account for most compound nouns, but there are other, rarer types as well. *Coordinative*, *copulative* compounds combine elements with a similar meaning, and the compound meaning may be a generalisation instead of a specialisation. *Bosnia-Herzegovina*, for example, is the combined area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but a *fighter-bomber* is an aircraft that is both a fighter and a bomber. *Iterative* or *amredita* compounds repeat a single element to express repetition or as an emphasis. *Day-by-day* and *go-go-go* are examples of this type of compound, which has more than one head.

2.4. Morphological types of compounds

Since English is a mostly analytic (isolating) language, unlike most other Germanic languages, it creates compounds by concatenating words without case markers since case is covert in English, Amer (1996). Compounds may be written in three different ways, which do not correspond to different pronunciations. Consider:

- The *solid* or *closed* form in which two usually moderately short words appear together as one. Solid compounds most likely consist of short (monosyllabic) units that often have been established in the language for a long time. Examples are wallpaper, makeup, housewife, lawsuit, etc.
- The *hyphenated* form in which two or more words are connected by a hyphen. Compounds that contain affixes, such as *house-build(er)* and *single-mind(ed)(ness)*, as well as adjective-adjective compounds and verb-verb compounds, such as *blue-green* and *freeze-dry*, are often hyphenated. Compounds that contain particles, such as *mother-of-pearl* and *salt-and-pepper* are also often hyphenated. The *open* or *spaced* form consisting of newer combinations of usually longer words, such as *distance learning*, *player piano*, *lawn tennis*, olive mount, Islamic university etc.

Open, hyphenated and closed forms may be encountered for the same compound noun, such as the triplets: *container ship*, *container-ship*, *containership* and *particle board*, *particle-board, particleboard*. This mostly depends on the individual choice of the writer rather than on a hard-and-fast rule. However such compounds in American English differ from British English. The hyphenated compound in the former may be solid in the latter. These morphological features of compound nouns also correspond to compound adjectives and compound verbs.

2.4.1. Compound adjectives

A compound adjective is formed when two or more adjectives work together to modify the same noun. These terms should be hyphenated to avoid confusion or ambiguity. Such adjectives are constructed in a very similar way to the compound noun. The black-and-blue mark, *leftover ingredients*, *blackboard jungle*, *green monkey disease,* and *gunmetal sheen,* are cases in point.

A compound adjective is a modifier of a noun. It consists of two or more morphemes of which the left-hand component limits or changes the modification of the right-hand one, as in "the dark-green dress": *dark* limits the *green* that modifies *dress*. The compound adjectives are divided morphologically into three types.

2.4.1.1. Solid compound adjectives

There are some well-established permanent compound adjectives that have become solid over a longer period, especially in American usage: *earsplitting*, *roundabout*, eye catching, and *downtown*. However, in British usage, these, apart from *downtown* and roundabout are more likely written with a hyphen: *ear-splitting*, *eye-catching*.

Other solid compound adjectives are:

- Numbers that are spelled out and have the suffix –*fold* added: "fifteenfold", "sixfold".
- Points of the compass: *northwest*, *northwester*, *northwesterly*, *northwestwards*, but not *North-West Frontier*.

2.4.1.2. Hyphenated compound adjectives

A compound adjective is hyphenated if the hyphen helps the reader differentiate a compound adjective from two adjacent adjectives that each independently modifies the noun. Compare the following examples:
- "acetic acid solution": a bitter solution producing vinegar or acetic acid (*acetic* + *acid* + *solution*)
- "acetic-acid solution": a solution of acetic acid.

The hyphen is unneeded when capitalisation or italicisation makes grouping clear:
- "old English scholar": an old person who is English and a scholar, or an old scholar who studies English
- "Old English scholar": a scholar of Old English.
- "*De facto* proceedings" (not "*de-facto*")

If, however, there is no risk of ambiguities, it may be written without a hyphen: *Sunday morning walk*.

Hyphenated compound adjectives may have been formed originally by an adjective preceding a noun:

- "Round table" → "round-table discussion"
- "Blue sky"   → "blue-sky law"
- "Red light"   → "red-light district"
- "Four wheels" → "four-wheel drive" (the singular, not the plural, is used)

Others may have originated with a verb preceding an adjective or on adverb:

- "Feel good" → "feel-good factor"
- "Buy now, pay later" → "buy-now pay-later purchase"

Yet others are created with an original verb preceding a preposition.

- "Stick on" → "stick-on label"
- "Walk on" → "walk-on part"
- "Stand by" → "stand-by fare"
- "Roll on, roll off" → "roll-on roll-off ferry"

However, combining an adverb (usually a word ending in "ly") and an adjective does not create a compound adjective. No hyphen is required because it is already clear that the adverb modifies the adjective rather than the subsequent noun. Consider the following example:

The remarkably hot day turned into a remarkably long week.

The following compound adjectives are *always* hyphenated when they are not written as one word:

An adjective preceding a noun to which –d or –ed has been added as a past-participle construction:

  a) "loud-mouthed hooligan"

       "middle-aged lady"

       "rose-tinted glasses"

  b) A noun, adjective, or adverb preceding a present participle:

       "an awe-inspiring personality"

       "a long-lasting affair"

       "a far-reaching decision"

  c) Numbers spelled out or as numeric:

       "seven-year itch"

"five-sided polygon"

"20th-century poem"

"30-piece band"

"tenth-story window"

d) A numeric with the affix *–fold* has a hyphen (*15-fold*), but when spelled out takes a solid construction (*fifteenfold*).

e) Numbers, spelled out or numeric, with added *–odd*: *sixteen-odd*, *70-odd*.

f) Compound adjectives with *high-* or *low-*: "high-level discussion", "low-price markup".

g) Colours in compounds:

"a dark-blue sweater"

"a reddish-orange dress".

h) Fractions as modifiers are hyphenated: "five-eighths inches", but if numerator or denominator are already hyphenated, the fraction itself does not take a hyphen: "a thirty-three thousandth part".

i) Fractions used as nouns have no hyphens: "I ate only one third of the pie."

j) Comparatives and superlatives in compound adjectives also take hyphens:

"the highest-placed competitor"

"a shorter-term loan"

k) However, a construction with *most* is not hyphenated:

"the most respected member".

l) Compounds including two geographical modifiers:

"Afro-Cuban"

"African-American" (sometimes)

"Anglo-Asian"

m) but not

"Central American".

The following compound adjectives are not normally hyphenated:

A compound adjective should not be hyphenated if the adjectives are capitalised, such as when they are part of a title. For example:

> *His book was entitled, "Gender Neutral Language in English Usage," and it revolutionised the way people think about sex roles.*

A compound adjective should not be hyphenated when there is no risk of ambiguity:

- o "a Sunday morning walk".

A compound adjective should not be hyphenated if left-hand components that end in *–ly* modify right-hand components that are past participles (ending in *–ed*):

- o "a hotly disputed subject"
- o "a greatly improved scheme"
- o "a distantly related celebrity"

Compound adjectives that include comparatives and superlatives with *more*, *most*, *less* or *least* should not be hyphenated:

- o "a more recent development"
- o "the most respected member"
- o "a less opportune moment"
- o "the least expected event"

Ordinarily hyphenated compounds with intensive adverbs in front of adjectives are not hyphenated:

- o "very much admired classicist"
- o "really well accepted proposal"

2.4.2. Compound verbs

A compound verb is usually composed of a preposition as a modifier and a verb as a head, such as: overrate, underline, outrun, browbeat, sidestep, manhandle, out-fox, whitewash, blacklist.

From a morphological point of view, some compound verbs are difficult to analyse because several derivations are plausible. *Blacklist*, for instance, might be analysed as an adjective+verb compound, or as an adjective+noun compound that becomes a verb through zero derivation. Most compound verbs originally have the collective meaning of both components, but some of them later gain additional meanings that may predominate the original. In the case of verb+noun compounds, the noun may be considered either as the subject (grammar) or the object of the verb. In *playboy*, for example, the noun is the subject of the verb (*the boy plays*), whereas it is the object in *callgirl* (*someone calls the girl*).

2.4.2.1. Phrasal verbs

English syntax distinguishes between phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs. Consider the following:

> *I held up my hand.*
> *I held up a bank.*
> *I held my hand up.*
> **I held a bank up.*

The first three sentences are possible in English; the last one is unlikely. When *to hold up* means *to raise*, it is a prepositional verb; the preposition *up* can be detached from the verb

and has its own individual meaning "*from lower to a higher position*". As a prepositional verb, it has a literal meaning. But when *to hold up* means *to rob*, it is a phrasal verb. A phrasal verb is used in an idiomatic, figurative or even metaphorical context. The preposition is inextricably linked to the verb, the meaning of each word cannot be determined independently but is in fact part of the idiom.

3 Other types of English Compound

English has a number of other kinds of compound verb idioms. There are compound verbs with two verbs (e.g. *make do*). These too can take idiomatic prepositions (e.g. *get rid of*). There are also idiomatic combinations of verb and adjective (e.g. *come true*, *run amok*) and verb and adverb (*make sure*), verb and fixed noun (e.g. *go ape*); and these, too, may have fixed idiomatic prepositions (e.g. *take place on*).

3.1 Compounding in Arabic:
In contrast to English, compounding does not play such an important part in Arabic. These compounds are of the following types:

1.   construct state المضاف اليه : the syntactic relation between the components of the possessive or genitive, e.g.

       دودة الأرض /duudat-u   l-'ard-i/ 'earth worm' .

       يوم الحساب/yawm-u   l-hisaab-i/ 'doomsday'

       رجل الضفادع/rajul-u d-dafaaDi'-i/ 'frogman'

       عابر سبيل/ abir sabil/ 'passer-by'

       طلوع النهار/tulu al nahar/'day-break'

       إ حترام الذات /ihtiram al ðat/ 'self- respect'.

2. /al-murakkabu l-mazjiyy/ المركب المزجي 'fusional compound': the syntactic relation between the elements is either the same as in بيت لحم Bethlehem, or in which the relation is unknown, simply because most of these words are of foreign origin. Each of these compounds is treated as one word in Arabic grammar.

3. /al-murkkabu l-isnaadiyy/ المركب الاسنادي 'predicative compound': the syntactic structure is that of predication. This is very similar to the English syntactic structure converted into a compound word, such as well-to-do. This type comprises a very limited class of proper noun, e.g. تأبط شراً/ta?abbata-sharran/.

4. In addition to these, Arab grammarians mention الأعداد المركبة, the compound numerals from 11 to 19. In this case each numeral behaves syntactically as one word. The two elements are simply juxtaposed in the English manner, the second element always being the word for 'ten'. Thus the English numeral fourteen is rendered in Arabic as / arba'ata 'ashar/

5.Numbers from twenty-one-to ninety-nine although behaving like compound words, the two parts are inflected just like other words having the same relation, e.g. twenty-one is/wahid wa'ishrun/
(one and twenty).

Arabic compound nouns may be classified into the following classes:

3.2 Primary Compounds
Primary compounds similar to English compounds consisting of Greek and Latin bases do not exist in Arabic.

3.3 Secondary Compounds
A compound refers to a group of words usually two, but sometimes more, joined together into one vocabulary unit that functions as a single part of speech. (Al-Jurf 2005).

Still Arabic has other forms of compounds which are formulated from combinations of different types, as shown below:

3.4. Compound particles: 'al-huruufu L-murakkaba' الحروف المركبة combine with ما/ma/(a particle with various different meanings حروف مركبة huruf murakka
that are used as adverbials or conjunctions, e.g.:

إنما /inna/ma/(only).

ربما /rubba/ma/ (perhaps)

ريثما /raythama/ (whilst)

مهما /mah/ma/ (whatever/however)

اذ ما /'id/ma/ (whenever)

حيثما /hythu/ma/ (whenever)

كيفما /kayfa/ma/ (however)

حالما /hala/ma/ (as soon as)

سيما و لاسيما /siyya/ma/and /la siyya/ma/ (especially)

3.5. Defective verb compound: they are usually constructed with /ma/ as their first element. This particle may add the sense of duration or negation to the second element, which can also be used independently, e.g.

ما دام /ma/dama/ (as long as)

ما فتئ /ma/fati?a/, ما برح /ma/bariha/, ما زال /ma zala/

and ما انفك /ma/infakka/ (they all mean 'still')

There are one or two interrogative pronouns in Arabic that are also compound: these are:

منذا /man da/ (who/m or who(m)ever?)

ماذا/ma/da/ (what? Or whatever?)

3.6 Compound nouns

(a) Many English compound nouns are rendered either by original nouns that Arabic already has in its stock such as: son-in –law صهر /sihr/, he-goat تيس /tays/, or by one–word nouns (or adjectives /participles functioning as nouns). Traditional grammarians believe that such Arabic compounds are derived from the trilateral verb form or from one of its derived forms, e.g. goldsmith صائغ /sa?igh/ (from the verb /sagha/), onlooker متفرج /mutafarrij/ from the verb /tafarraja/

(b) Some are rendered in Arabic by the structure n+adj (+adj) (the normal order in Arabic) e.g. the Red Sea البحر الأحمر /al bahr al-ahmar /

(c) Some are rendered by a syntactic structure that differs from the above mentioned types, for example: part of speech قسم من أقسام الكلام /qism min aqsam al kalm /(one part from the part of speech).

This group of compounds covers the following:

Proper noun:

Some original Arabic proper nouns are compounds of the form n+adj, e.g القاموس المحيط/alqamus almuhit/ (the comprehensive dictionary) and التل الكبير /al tal al kabir/ (the big hill - a place in Egypt).

Personal proper nouns:

ابو بكر/Abu-Baker/   شجرة الدر /Shajaratu ADurr/

Geographical names:

دير ياسين /Deir Yaseen/ مكة المكرمة /Makka Al-mokrama/

Titles

رئيس prime minister /ra'ees l-wuzaraa'/ امير المؤمنين 'prince of believers'/Ameer l-Mo'meneen/
الوزراء

Others /NaTeHat saHaab/ (skyscraper) ناطحة سحاب /safenat faDaa'/ (spaceship) سفينة فضاء

Noun + adjective

These are very productive in Arabic, as in the following:

Subject names:

/Al-feezyaa' n-nawwawia/ الفيزياء النووية atomic physics

Other technical terms

الامعاء الدقيقة /al-am9aa' d-daqeeqa/ (small intestine) ،ميناء جوي /menaa' jawee/ (airport)

Noun + apposited noun + adjective

jomhoryat mesr l-'arabia جمهورية مصر العربية Arab republic of Egypt،

Noun + apposited n. + apposited n

رئيس مجلس الوزراء /ra?ees majeles l-wozaraa?/ (prime minister)

Particle + noun

The negative particle لا /la/'no' is used as a prefix, making possible compounds like:
لاسلكي /laselki/ (wireless) ، لأأخلاقي /la?axlaqee/ (impolital)

3.7 Compound adjective:

(a) English compound adjectives are translated to single-word adjectives, e.g.:
trustworthy موثوق /mawtuq/
up to date حديث /hadith /

(b) the adj +adj type where the relation is that of co-ordination, which usually takes the same form in Arabic, e.g: bitter-sweet مرحلو /murr hlw/ and in some cases where the relation is that of qualification., e.g: dark blue أزرق غامق /azraq gamiq/

(c) Otherwise it takes the form of a simile with as (ك/ka/) as does the
    n+adj type where the relation is that of resemblance, e.g.:
    red-hot حار كالجمر /harr kal jamr/ (as hot as live coal)
    blood-red أحمر كالدم /ahmar kal dam/(as red as blood).

snow-white أبيض كالثلج /abyad kal talj/ (as white as snow).

(d) Most of the other relations in the types n+adj+adj are usually
rendered by an Arabic syntactic structure, usually employing a preposition, e.g:

sea-sick مصاب بدوران البحر /musab bi duwar il bahr /(afflicted with
sickness of the sea).   blood thirsty متعطش للدماء /muta attish li-ddima?/(thirsty of
blood).

(e) Most of the adv+adj compound adjectives are usually rendered in Arabic by means of
the possessive, e.g:

ever green دائم الخضرة /da?im ul xudrah / (permanent of greenness)
ever-ripe زائد النضج /za?id ul nudj/(excessive of ripeness).
or with the help of an intensifier, e.g: all-important مهم جداً./ muhim jiddan/ (very
important)

3. 7 Compound verbs

Morphologically, some compound verbs are difficult to analyse because several
derivations are plausible. Blacklist, for instance, might be analysed as an adjective+verb
compound, or as an adjective+noun compound that becomes a verb through zero
derivation.

Most compound verbs of English originally have the collective meaning of both
components, some of them later gain additional meaning that may predominate the
original, accurate sense. Therefore, sometimes the resultant meanings are seemingly
barely related to the original contributors. Compound verbs composed of a noun and verb
are comparatively rare, and the noun is generally not the direct object of the verb. In
English, compounds such as *bread-bake or *car-drive' do not exist, yet we find literal
action words, such as breastfeed, tape record and washing instructions on clothing as for
example hand wash. The equivalent of type of compound verb consists of a derived
nominal plus noun in Arabic as in ghaseel yad (hand wash)

The adv + v type (the verb not being a participle) is extremely foreign and strange to the
Arab student. It is non-existent in Arabic, and its meaning is usually expressed by a verb,
basic or derived, e.g:

uphold سند /sanda/(support) (basic).
undergo تحمل /tahmmala/(suffer) (derived).

Those compounds where the verb takes the form of the present or past participle are usually treated in Arabic as compound adjectives (as is actually the case in English) and are formed in the same ways.

3.8 Self compounds

This type of compound in English is very similar to its Arabic counterpart; even the relation between the two elements is the same (i.e. the possessive relation) e.g.:

myself نفسي /nafsi/, ذاتي / ðati/,

yourself نفسك /nafsika/, ذاتك / ðatuka/

ourselves أنفسنا /anfusunna/, ذواتنا / ðawatuna/.

In both languages, these are used as reflexives which are semantically used for emphasis.

Arabic compounds have a gender assignment.

The plural formation of compound nouns can often be identified whenever their inflectional characteristics differ from those of the elements of which they are formed.

4. Contrasting Arabic English compounds

1. English makes extensive use of compounding; however it is of very limited use in Arabic. Arabic compounds are phrases with normal word-order, compressed into two or three lexical items. These patterns of compounds that exist in Arabic are not particularly productive in making new formations. These patterns are outside the ordinary derivational structure of Arabic. (Al Jurf, 2005). It is commonly known that in Arabic the thought is relatively vague and less important than the form. In other words form matters and thought is an after-thought. Conversely, English-speakers attach more value to the idea, expecting the speaker or writer to get straight to the point, and less on the way it is formulated. It is what you say not the way that you say it. This awareness of the difference in the structure and purpose between Arabic and English syntactic analysis of the compound is pertinent to understanding.

5. Interpreting compounds

Research in the field of natural language processing and understanding is prolific and has contributed significantly to the process of comprehending compound words. Understanding compounds in discourse depends on the way the compound is formulated. There is no one size fits all rule because word forms are not frozen patterns; they are constantly mutating. Therefore the rules for understanding compounding cannot be applied

rigidly. According to Inhoff et al. (2000), the interpretation of compounds consists of two processes. The first involves retrieving the constituent word forms (this is facilitated by the presence of a space) and the second process entails integrating the constituents (this is impeded by the presence of a space). There is also the decomposition of compound processing whereby a compound is broken into its respective constituents and the constituents placed under appropriate word classes.

The gist of the literature on the processing of compounds stresses that the constituents of the compound play a vital role in the processing of the compound.

6. Translating Compounds

Translating has been a much discussed topic over the years, with proponents extolling its virtues and opponents explaining how the quality of translation is a dumbing down of the original. Although quality is always an important issue in all walks of life, this study takes the view that translation quality is a matter of relativity because all translations are inevitably flawed. The most widely quoted lists of translation ideas and concepts are the same across many studies and seem to be routinely glossed over with little empirical evidence or fresh insights.

The unrelated languages under investigation operate with systems which are poles apart both in the form and in the content structure. Thus, English has at its disposal a variety of structural compound devices to convey a specific communicative purpose. By contrast, the Arabic message is deprived of such a dynamic linguistic device. Generally, translating languages that are distant culturally and structurally different pose a challenge and different techniques are adopted to achieve the 'dynamic equivalent'. Translating English compounds is a bête noire for translators. Compared to other features and language patterns (mechanisms), compounds pose a problem as they are considered as complex patterns. English has specific properties that cannot be found in Arabic in terms of word formation and is often characterised as being, compact, subtle and implicit. In contrast, Arabic tends to be blunt, upfront and woolly. English compound constructions due to their semantic compactness, often lead to misinterpretation and mistranslation. The following points highlight the different challenges facing the Arabic translator:

a) Exocentric compounds are difficult to translate due to the fact that their meaning cannot be deduced from their parts. For example: *greenback*, stun-gun; flower-power;; nitty-gritty; brain-drain.

b) The meaning of such compounds cannot be determined from either component but lies outside the centre of the compound. An external element must be added to interpret the compound. For example, *a greenback* is not '*a back that is green*' but rather '*an object that possesses a green back* – in American slang *'a dollar'*,

c) Compounds may be usefully interpreted in relationship to other syntactic patterns of English.

d) The compound may precede the noun; it refers to (*a ten-year-old boy*) or it may follow the noun (*a boy ten years old*). The first problem in dealing with compounds is how to distinguish phrasal compounds from simple phrases. Recourse must be added to additional non-syntactic features such as prosodic characteristics of stress, pitch or juncture, the use of special forms of the constituent elements, or the possibility of either interrupting the construction or expanding it by the addition of further modifiers. In languages that have stress systems, there are often special patterns of modulation signaling compounds as such. The presence of the juncture phenomena (internal disjuncture) assists in identifying compounds of English but not Arabic and this may complicate the translation processes from English to Arabic**.**

e) It is the single stress that differentiates compound nouns from word groups. In word groups both elements take stress, e.g. 'gold 'chain, 'Oxford' University, 'lady' doctor, if the group consists of more than two words, each word receives primary stress:
 'Tottenham' 'Court' 'Road'. Again this may harden the translation process from English to Arabic since such a system is not available in Arabic. (Spencer, 1991)

Consequently, the morphological divergence in constructing compounds in the two languages causes learners to commit serious interlingual errors mainly in translating from Arabic into English. Some such errors are expected to be caused because of students' literal translation from Arabic to English and vice versa. However, some errors may be caused when teachers either fail to transfer correct patterns or concepts (meanings) to their students or do not stress and emphasize patterns, which have been correctly introduced. Thus, the result is that the students do not grasp such concepts properly. Additionally, some of the errors are caused because of the false application or ignorance of compounding rules.

Finally, some of the errors may be caused under redundancy which indicates that the students deduce false rules from what they perceive as similar patterns and overgeneralize such rules when they form English sentences.

7. Summary and recommendations

This study investigated the main differences between compounds in Arabic and English and identified areas of difficulties in compounding that are generally not easily understood by Arab learners of English. The study shows clearly that there are numerous differences. These are mainly represented in solid and hyphenated compounds along with the role of stress in compounding which is unavailable in Arabic. Therefore, errors are largely made as a result of difficulty in constructing English compounds and the likely interference between the two languages**.**

To understand and use English compounds competently the following steps are recommended:

1. English language practitioners are recommended to teach English compounding from the very beginning as a system and not just as a haphazard collection of unconnected words. They should group together spatial compound words logically, and teach their meanings and uses through context and then conduct intensive drilling.
2. Compounding can only be mastered if its usage is carefully introduced and consistently reinforced. Therefore, teachers are strongly recommended to teach verbs, nouns or adjectives that govern compounding.
3. It is recommended that all three types of compounding, the open form, spaced form, hyphenated form, and the solid or closed forms should receive adequate attention both in initial teaching and in subsequent reinforcement and revision.
4. Teachers are advised to be aware of the different types of compounding errors made by their students through observation and using prepared diagnostic tests that help them to be aware of the common errors so as to be able to apply adequate remedial work where necessary, and to predict what will be difficult and thus treat these difficulties by devoting special preventive care and emphasis to them.
5. Students should be informed why their errors are considered to be errors. For example, many students cannot differentiate between the use of "hyphen or spaced form or closed form". Therefore, when errors occur it is necessary to point out the source of the error so that the students learn to differentiate between them.

6. Teachers are advised to relate problematic English compounding to their Arabic equivalents in order to draw students' attention to the fact that literal translation into Arabic may lead them to make errors. So not every English compound word has a definite Arabic equivalent and vice versa.

7. It is necessary to give teachers in-service training courses to improve their performance in teaching. Further, evaluation and designing remedial plans for slow-learner students should be considered.

8. Due to the complexity of the English compounding system and its rules which are not always consistent, the students need to use a certain grouping plan for learning a considerable number of compounds of all sorts. In this grouping plan there are many groups. Each group contains compounds made up of similar elements with one and the same syntactic or semantic relation holding between their elements. Here is an example:

Group1: daybreak, sunrise, bloodshed, housekeeper, self-command, self-respect, etc.
Group2: headache, toothache, stomachache, etc., nightclub, night porter, etc.
Group3: teabag, dining room, inkstand, etc.
Group4: handwriting, fly-fishing sword-cut, etc.
Group5: manservant/ maidservant, bull elephant/ cow elephant, he-goat/she-goat, cock sparrow/ hen sparrow, etc.
Group6: blackbird, blackboard, bluebell, common law, green-room, etc
Group7: mad-house, sick-room, sweet-shop, etc.
Group8: drawing-room, knitting-needle, looking-glass, walking-stick, etc
Group9: drawbridge, grindstone, playground, treadmill, etc.
Group10: afterthought, byway, outpost, overcoat, underclothes, etc.

This grouping plan is very useful because it can expand and cover plenty of common compound words in English. This helps to increase the students' stock of such compounds. Moreover, it may be good to provide students with the syntactic differences and semantic relations between the elements of compounds. In terms of translation, the adopted process lies in paraphrasing compounds and undertaking semantic translation which aims to produce accurate meaning

Generally, taking these recommendations into consideration will enhance the process of learning and translating compounds by university students of translation in particular and English learners in general.

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