



An academic analysis of the inappropriate usage of adverbs of manner and verbs by Turkish learners in translating texts from Turkish to English

Soner Kaya

sonerkaya@bingol.edu.tr

Bingöl University, Bingöl, Turkey

ABSTRACT

This scholarly article examines the challenges encountered by first grade Turkish college students when translating Turkish to English texts, with a particular emphasis on their improper use of manner adverbs and verbs. The study reveals that the placement of adverbs and verbs in English and Turkish differs, making it difficult for students to do translation between these languages. The research investigates the precise grammatical errors identified in the translations produced by the students. It provides examples of improper placement of manner adverbs and verbs in English sentences. Examples of word order problems illustrate the difficulty that Turkish students encounter when attempting to learn English syntax. The research also demonstrates the impact of syntactical transfer on manner adverbs and verbs, thereby highlighting the extent to which students rely on Turkish word order patterns. A thorough understanding of similarities and differences between Turkish and English is crucial for accurate translation, according to the study. The study suggests that by concentrating language instruction on minor distinctions in syntax, students may be able to achieve a higher rate of accuracy when translating Turkish texts into English. The research concludes by emphasizing the criticality of instructing Turkish students in English on both the similarities and differences in syntax so that they may acquire the necessary proficiency to translate.

Keywords: Syntactic differences, Translation, Negative Transfer, Word order

I. INTRODUCTION

Turkish and English exhibit syntactic disparities, resulting in dissimilar word order patterns in sentences. The syntactic difference between these two languages is evident in the usage of parts of speech such as adverbs of manner and verbs. The sentence structure in Turkish follows the pattern of subject + object + verb (SOV), whereas in English it is subject + verb + object. In Turkish, adverbs of manner are positioned before a verb, but in English, they are positioned after a verb. In this sense, Enisa Mede et al (2014) asserts, "In English, the verb usually comes after the subject. So the basic word order is SVO (subject-verb-object). On the contrary of Turkish word order English word order is strict and quite inflexible" (72). As the quotation suggests, Turkish and English have significant differences in the usage of words in sentences. As a Turkish college instructor teaching translation, I saw that the described syntactic discrepancies lead to specific wrong word usages by students when translating sentences or documents from Turkish to English. These misuses indicate that students experience negative transfer when translating, since they use specific language structures inappropriately in English. However, these students have been seen to experience negative transfer especially in terms of using verbs and adverbs of manner when translating Turkish texts into English.

II. DISCUSSION

As described in the introduction, first grade Turkish college students encounter negative transfer when translating Turkish sentences or texts into English due to the syntactical differences between the two languages. This occurs because they employ their proficiency in the Turkish language while utilizing specific structures in English. An observation was made regarding the

misuse of adverbs of manner in a group of students who were given a translation exam and tasked with translating specific sentences and texts into English. As a result, the translated texts produced by this group exhibited errors in terms of word order in English. The following is one of the texts that were provided to those students:

Mete bir sabah erken uyandı ve hızlıca mutfağa gitti. Mutfakta yavaşça oturdu ve bir bardak çay içti. Çayını sessizce içtikten sonra yatak odasına gitti. Üniformasını dikkatlice gardiropdan çıkarıp yavaşça ütülemeye başladı. Ütüyü bitirdikten sonra üniformasını yavaşça giyip hızlıca dışarı çıktı. Hava çok güzeldi ve güneş pırıl pırıl parlıyordu. Mete dikkatlice caddede karşıdan karşıya geçtikten sonra otobüs durağında sabırla beklemeye başladı. Otobüs durağa geldiğinde Mete otobüse binmedi çünkü cüzdanını evde unuttuğunu fark etti ve isteksizce eve doğru yürümeye başladı.

The aforementioned first grade students were given the text above to translate, with the purpose of assessing their ability to accurately place adverbs of manner during the translation process. The students' exam papers clearly indicated that certain students struggle with accurately translating texts into English due to their inability to correctly place adverbs of manner according to English word order. Some of errors that were observed in the texts translated by students were as follows:

- e.g. early got up
- e.g. fast went
- e.g. slowly sat
- e.g. slowly wore
- e.g. fast got out
- e.g. brightly shining
- e.g. carefully crossed

Students commit a linguistic error when they position adverbs of manner before verbs, as evidenced by the examples extracted from the translated texts which demonstrate that they have difficulty in positioning such adverbs correctly. It is evident that students experience syntactic transfer when translating from Turkish to English, as these errors are a direct consequence of their knowledge of Turkish word order. As students' knowledge of Turkish is the source of those errors in the translated texts, it can be said that "the problem of how the similarities and differences between the source language, the mediating language and the target language affect language teaching in second language learning is one of the main starting points of language teaching studies" (Albayrak and Tüfekçioğlu 1546). As the excerpt demonstrates, in order to prevent errors or incorrect use of English parts of speech by students translating, particular attention should be paid to the similarities and differences between Turkish and English.

An examination of the translated sentences produced by the students reveals that the syntactical distinctions between English and Turkish also lead to the improper usage of verbs by the students. Due to the fact that verbs are mostly situated at the end of sentences in Turkish, certain students place verbs at the end of their texts. The following are some of the sentences that the students were given to translate:

- e.g. Çocuklar sabah bahçede oynadı
- e.g. Arkadaşım erkenden kütüphaneye gitti.
- e.g. Kırmızı arabayı yıkadık.
- e.g. Herkes bu yemeği beğendi.
- e.g. Bazı öğrenciler ödevini hemen yaptı.

Upon analysing the exam papers, it became apparent that certain students experienced syntactical transfer from Turkish. This was visible in the sentences that were translated into English, as they had errors resulting from the application of Turkish word order. Here are a few examples of verb misuse found in students' translated texts:

- e.g. Children morning in the garden played
- e.g. My friend early went to library.
- e.g. I red car washed.
- e.g. Everybody this meal enjoyed
- e.g. Some students their homework immediately did.

As students were allowed to use dictionaries and they were given past participle of the verbs during the exam, most of them used correct words, but they couldn't place words in correct order since they utilize their knowledge of Turkish word order. In this sense, Behrooz and Shiva (2022) argue, "When learning a foreign language, the contact of the native language learner with this foreign language sometimes leads to the transfer of language habits of the source language in the teaching/ learning process, including syntactic interactions" (33). The quotation suggests that syntactic transfer from the first language (L1) could impede the accurate translation of Turkish texts into English and lead to students producing translated texts with incorrect word order.

As some examples of misuse of adverbs of manner and verbs in terms of word order in English above indicate, the lack of knowledge of word order in English results in wrong translation of texts from Turkish to English by students. When these students do not have enough knowledge of syntactic features of English, they employ their knowledge of word order in Turkish. Therefore, syntactical similarities and differences must be taught to students to ensure a successful translation of texts by them. Teaching syntactical difference between Turkish and English can minimize errors resulting from word order and teaching similarities between these two languages can lead to a successful learning of English word order, thus ensuring the translation of texts from Turkish to English successfully as Chen (2020) suggests, “it should be pointed out that the similarities between the native language and the second language in vocabulary, grammar and culture will promote second language acquisition to great extent” (306).

III. CONCLUSION

Turkish and English sentences have different word order due to syntactic differences. Turkish way adverbs come before verbs, while English ones come after. This rigid word order contrasts with English, where the verb follows the subject. These syntactic differences cause negative transfer for Turkish college students translating Turkish sentences or texts into English. Their Turkish skills are used with English structures. A group of students taking a translation exam and translating sentences and texts into English misused manner adverbs. The translated materials by this group have English word order issues. The syntactical differences between English and Turkish also cause students to misuse verbs. Turks usually put verbs at the end of sentences, so some students do the same in English. Thus, Students may translate Turkish materials into English with erroneous word order due to syntactic transfer from the first language. Students must learn syntactical similarities and differences to translate Turkish to English. Teaching syntactical differences between Turkish and English helps reduce word order errors while teaching similarities can help students acquire English word order.

IV. REFERENCES

- [1] Albayrak, F. & Tüfekçioğlu, B. (2022). Analysis of Written Expressions of Turkish Learners' as a Second Language in Terms of Typological Features of Turkish, *International Journal of Education Technology and Scientific Researches*, 7(19), 1543-1595.
- [2] Behrooz (2019). The Interference Of Turkish Language Syntax In The Learning Process Of French-Language Learners. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Development Research*, 3(1), 32-44.
- [3] Chen, C. (2020). A Study on Positive Transfer of Native Language and Second Language Teaching Methods. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies (TPLS)*, 10 (3), 306-312.
- [4] Mede, E., Tural, C., Ayaz, D., Çalışır, K., et al. (2014). The effects of language transfer in Turkish EFL learners. *ELT Research Journal*, 3(2), 70-83.