A Cross Mapping of Temporal at

–ba "Forward and Backward Translation"

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Abstract

This paper discusses on the mapping of the English preposition *at* in the context of forward and backward translation in temporal domain based on the temporal sense of *at* of the English preposition and its extension to different lexical positions in the Arabic language. This can be explained in the way the conceptual mapping sense is used to an underlying concept and finding its lexical meaning in the target language. The forward and backward translation tests are suggested in order to identify the concept of mapping of the three different groups, using the temporal sense, in three semantic mapping categories (SDM, ZDM and DDM).

Keywords: English Temporal *at*, Arabic temporal *ba*, Semantic categories and cross mapping

1. Introduction

In the field of semantics, the focus of the study was mainly on the mapping of words. It is important to highlight here that prepositions, which are loaded as highly polysemous, also pose a challenge in the conceptual mapping. In this paper, mapping included mainly the following semantic mapping categories:

a. Category 1: same domain mapping (SDM). In this category, EFL learners map a preposition to the same domain in both languages. In other words, the translation and original are in the same conceptual domain.

b. Category 2: zero prepositions (ZDM). In this category, EFL learners' mapping of a preposition is zero. This means, there is no usage of prepositions in a translated text; instead, learners use the adverbs in place of the relevant prepositions.

c. Category 3: different domain mapping (DDM). In this category, Iraqi EFL learners map the domain to different domain, indicating that both the translation and original are in the different domains.

The categorization of the domain usages into three categories would allow the identification of the semantic mapping of the English preposition *at* and its correspondent into the Arabic prepositions. Several meanings might be invoked to characterise the transfer of the English preposition *at* into the temporal domain from/ to English - Arabic language.

1.1 Temporal - at

Imran (1999) states that the idea of orientation point links the spatial and temporal usage, where a point in space is transferred to a point on some time continuum or temporal space. The temporal uses in Dirven's (1993) analysis always extend directly from the spatial uses. Hence, while the *at*-spatial denotes a spatial point, the *at*-temporal indicates a 'point' in time, such as *at 5am today*, or *at midnight*. However, what may be regarded as a zero dimensional chronological 'point' is a matter of construal and hence, it is not one of objective reality. Therefore, uses such as *at night, at the 13th to 16th week of pregnancy* are (strictly speaking) not the 'point' in the chronological time, but are rather comprehended as the 'point' of time; notwithstanding the fact that they actually designate rather than being the 'periods' of time. In addition, *at* in the temporal domain may also indicate age or a point in one's life time such as *at age 18*. Some fixed phrases, such as *at this moment, at this point in time, at present*, etc., are taken to be established conventional units which fall within the temporal domain (Rice, 1996).

1.2 Temporal- ba

Just like the English *at*, *ba*/ب is also used to indicate time or an event which is directly extended from the spatial usage. Thus, the temporal *ba* indicates a point in time such as *ba al-khmesah* (at 5 o'clock) or *ba muntasaf al-lail* (at midnight). Furthermore, *ba,* which can be regarded as a zero dimensional 'point' is a matter of supportive and not one of the objective reality, as in the English temporal *at*. For this, Omar (2005) explains that certain uses, such as *at night, at the 12th* place, are exactly speaking the 'point' of time in the temporal sense.

2. Methodology

2.1 Respondents

In this study, the respondents were categorised into three proficiency groups. The three groups of respondents made up one target population. These respondents were requested to sit for the Oxford Proficiency Placement Test before streaming them into three different groups. The target population comprised of Iraqi students who were attending an Iraqi higher secondary school in Kuala Lumpur, aged between 15 and 17 years old. This school adopts the Iraqi School Curriculum and is very much similar to the Iraqi schools in Iraq and other Iraqi schools established in other countries. Due to the fact that they possess the same education system in Iraq, Arabic is used as their language of instruction, while English is taught from the last three levels of the higher secondary schools, namely the 10th grade, 11th grade, and 12th gr. In total, the students attend four periods of English a week, with each period lasting 45 minutes; this means they have a total of 180 minutes of English lessons per week. At these grade levels, English is taught as a foreign language. Students in both the Art and Science streams must take Arabic and English as both subjects, as required for the entry into the universities in Iraq.

In this study, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was used as the instrument to gauge and measure the language proficiency of the respondents. The OPT was chosen primarily because it provides a reliable and efficient means of placing students according to their proficiency levels. The test was standardized and aligned according to the proficiency grading system provided by the Common European Framework of reference for language learning, teaching and assessment (commonly known as CEF), and also adopted by the Association of the Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), as well as by major governments and institutions, including the examination boards throughout Europe. The test consists of 100 multiple choice questions in two parts on grammar covering areas such as verbs, tenses, articles, infinitives, countable and uncountable nouns, tail questions, comparative and superlatives and prepositions. To answer these questions, students were given 30 minutes on each part of the test (for part 1 which contains 50 questions) and another 30 minutes for part 2 (which also contains 50 questions). The test was scored by giving each correct item with one point, making a possible 100 points (raw score) for a perfect score on the test. For the purpose of the placement test, the raw marks for the test were scaled based on the groups mean (scaled score).

3. Forward and Backward translation

In the present study, Iraqi EFL learners were asked to translate the stimulus English sentences into the Arabic language (forward). In other part, they were asked to translate the stimulus Arabic sentences to the English language (backward). In particular, the analysis utilises the semantic mapping for prepositional temporal meanings in the semantic mapping categories. The examples discussed below allow observation of the relationship and the mappings in the forward translation from the first language L1 to the second language L2 and the backward from the second language L2 to the first languageL1. Examples are provided in the sub- sections below.

3.1 Temporal- at

As shown in (1) and Figure (1), *at* preposition denotes the link between the trajector TR (the train) and the verb abstract future (will arrive) to the more abstract sense the time shown by the landmark LM (10.00 o'clock). According to Dirven (1993), temporal domains always extend directly from the spatial domain. Thus, the spatial usages indicate point in

place, while *at* temporal usage indicates a point in time. In other words, there is a movement from the physical to temporal domain to a point in time which denotes the temporal usage.

(1) The train will arrive **at** 10:00 o'clock.

In the mapping below, it would seem that the configuration of the forward translation from the English to Arabic language of the temporal domain *at* indicates two possible domains, the same domain mapping SDM and the ZDM zero domain mapping of different forms.

a.   سوف يصل القطار **بلعاشرة** مساء

Will arrive the train at 10.00   o'clock.

Sawfa yasel al-qetaar **ba** al-saa al-asherah mesaa.

b. سوف يصل القطار **في** العاشرة مساء

Will arrive the train at 10.00 o'clock.

Sawfa yasel al-qetaar **fii** al-saa al-asherah mesaa.

As shown in (1a) the SDM of the English preposition *at* is the Arabic preposition *ba*. The temporal domain of *ba* is used to indicate a point in time extended from the spatial uses of the trajector (the train = alqetaar), a temporal concept which is directly extended from the spatial uses of the landmark (*at* 10.00 o'clock = *ba* al-asherah mesaa). In addition to this, the Arabic preposition *fii* is used to indicate the temporal sense of the English preposition *at,* as shown in (1b) and Figure (2) the notion of this sentence involves the trajector (the train will arrive = sawfa yasel) as   enclosed by time rather than a point in time.

c. سوف يصل القطار الساعه العاشرة مساء

Will arrive the train 10.00 o'clock.

Sawfa yasel al-qetaar al-asherah mesaa.

The second mapping is the ZDM of the Arabic preposition as shown in (1 c). This sentence indicates the future sense (will = sawfa) from the trajector (the train =al-qetaar) to indicate the future sense at an adverbial point which is the landmark (*on* 10.00 o'clock = *ala* al-asherah).This mapping is an interesting illustration of the mapping between languages. In this example, the use of the Arabic prepositions *ba* and *fii* with the English prepositions *at* and *in* are conversely used.

In the translation above, the Arabic preposition *ba* is equally used to the English preposition *at* to indicate the notion of point between the trajector and the landmark. While *fii* is used to indicate the same activity in another position of the trajector and the landmark using the relationship of an enclosed events in a place. Another type of mapping is the ZDM zero mapping of prepositions to indicate the notion of temporal domain in an adverbial sense.

3.2 Temporal- ba

Ba temporal mirrors English temporal *at.* As illustrated in (2) and Figure (3), *ba* denotes the notion of point that links the spatial or physical sense of the trajector action (je'atoo ana) to the temporal sense, the landmark (muntasaf al-lail). This results in *ba* as a temporal domain or in other words, *ba* usage indicates a point in time.

2. جئت بمنتصف الليل.

The configuration below represents the respondents' mapping of temporal *ba* domain into the SDM and the ZDM mapping categories.

a. I came **at** the midnight.

Je'atoo ana **ba**   muntasaf al-lail.

Je'atoo **ba**   muntasaf al-lail.

As shown in (2a), the Temporal domain of the Arabic preposition *ba* is used to translate to the English preposition *at,* as in the figure above, the English preposition *at* links the trajector action (je'atoo ana = I came) at the temporal point at time to the landmark (muntasaf al-lail = at the midnight). Temporal uses in Dirven's (1993) analysis always extend directly from the spatial uses (Rice 1996). The ZDM mapping is shown in the sentence below.

b. I came midnight.

Je'atoo ana muntasaf al-lail.

Je'atoo muntasaf al-lail.

In this vein, the deletion of the preposition as shown in sentence (2b) resulted in the respondents using a substitute (verb + adverb) to indicate the mapping in the temporal domain of zero prepositions. Thus, the trajector (I came= je'atoo) is

placed on an adverbial time (midnight =muntasaf al-lail). In the translation above, the English preposition *at* is used equally to the Arabic preposition *ba* to indicate the notion point at the landmark. The respondents conceptualised their mapping to the ZDM to indicate the same semantic representation in an adverbial sense.

4. Conclusion

The conceptual analysis for the English preposition *at* translated to the Arabic language have been illustrated with examples in the sections above, the results are quite involved on the assumption that the mapping within the temporal domain indicate that *at* merely means 'location at a point' or 'specific location' in the physical and   abstracts senses. As for this situation, *at* preposition involves the notion of orientation in the relationship of the trajector and the landmark. Trajector as Point of reference direct at the landmark. In addition, the results of the present study of the Arabic preposition *ba* contribute that the temporal domain of the Arabic preposition *ba* to the English language used to indicate both the physical as well as the abstract positions at a point.   This notion could indicate the activity associated with the landmark or involve the notion of the point as the target of motion or aims. The semantic representation of this preposition indicates that *ba* is used to express the idea of a particular or certain relationship with an unspecified dimension of the landmark.

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Figure1. Temporal-*At*
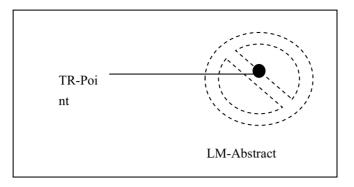

Figure 2. Temporal-*At-Fii*

TR-Point

LM-Abstract

Figure3. Temporal-*Ba*