

Reima Al-Jarf

Multiplicity of Translation Equivalents in Arabic

The last few decades have witnessed a plethora of newly coined terms in almost every language and every subject area. Latest developments in information and communications technology have accelerated the spread, adoption and/or translation of new technical terms and concepts across countries and languages. Like other languages, Arabic tries to keep abreast of latest developments in terminology through Arabization of new terminology coined in English, French and other languages. For technical terms such as *nanotechnology*, *mobile*, *linguistics*, *petroleum*, *computer* several Arabic equivalents exist. For example, the term '*linguistics*' has about 20 Arabic equivalents. This study investigates the sources of and factors that affect the use of multiple Arabic equivalents to foreign technical terms. A corpus of foreign terms with multiple Arabic equivalents was collected and examined. It was found that the multiplicity of Arabized terms is due to several factors such as: (i) Differences in the translators' working languages, i.e. differences in the foreign source languages from which the same term was translated. Some specialists/translators translate a term that stands for the same concept from English, others translate it from French, German, Spanish or Italian...etc; (ii) Arabization depends on individual efforts. Translators do their best depending on their knowledge and expertise; (iii) Translators' attitudes towards modernity and classicism; (iv) The same translator uses different equivalents to the same term when translating different texts; (v) Lack of coordination among the different Arabic Language Academies in Arab countries, as a result of which different equivalents are coined to the same term. Examples, sources and recommendations for raising students' awareness will be discussed in detail.