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Research Article

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Corpus-Based Investigation of Translation Students' Awareness of Semantic Prosodies of Near-synonyms

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Abstract

This study investigates Arabic EFL translation students' awareness of semantic prosody, which is the connotative meaning (described as favorable, neutral, unfavorable) of a word/unit emerging from its typical lexical environment. Awareness of semantic prosody can indicate students' depth of vocabulary and translation competence. Using known semantic prosody tendencies, we conducted an English–Arabic bidirectional analysis of students' awareness of implicit semantic prosody in two groups of synonyms-the CAUSE and CONSEQUENCE groups. We analyzed students' production in the learner translation corpus SauLTC and their results on a corpus-driven semantic prosody test. The results indicate that students addressed the problem of translating semantic prosody in particular words and failed to notice it in others. Moreover, students displayed a higher degree of semantic prosody awareness when translating into Arabic than when translating into English. The results show that learners tend to notice semantic prosody more when translating into their L2, as opposed to their L1. They confirm that semantic prosody awareness takes time to develop significantly, and such development does not always correlate with learners' proficiency levels. Implications for incorporating semantic prosody into translation studies and developing translators' pragmatic competence to improve their choices of equivalents are provided.

Keywords: bidirectional analysis, SauLTC, semantic prosody, translation studies, near-synonyms

1. Introduction

Semantic prosody is the positive or negative sense acquired by a word or phrase due to its frequent occurrence or associations with certain collocates [1]. Semantic prosody also relates to why a writer or speaker expresses themselves in specific ways [2], making it interesting to translation scholars. Semantic prosody is an essential element in a unit of meaning. For instance, Xiao and McEnery (2006) [3] found that the synonyms *OUTCOME* and *AFTERMATH* have different semantic prosodies-while the former is positive, the latter is negative; consequently, they do not render the same equivalence.

This study investigates whether translation students' awareness of semantic prosody correlates with whether they are translating from English to Arabic or vice versa, using a combination of corpus data and experimental methods. We used the SauLTC learner corpus to collect data on students' awareness of semantic prosody when translating English to Arabic. For measuring semantic prosody awareness in translation from Arabic to English, we used predetermined semantic prosody of the two groups of synonyms (*the CAUSE* and *CONSEQUENCE groups*), adapted from Xiao and McEnery (2006) [3], and their Arabic equivalences. In doing so, we intended to bridge the gap between semantic prosody and translation studies by gauging students' awareness of semantic prosody when translating selected synonyms from English into Arabic and vice versa. Our study highlights the importance of teaching semantic prosody to enhance translation quality.

To meet our objectives, we formulated the following research questions:

1) How do Arabic translation students address the problem of translating the semantic prosody of near-synonyms?
2) Do Arabic translation students display better awareness of semantic prosody when translating into Arabic than while translating into English?
3) Does the student's proficiency level correlate with their choice of appropriate equivalents concerning semantic prosody?

2. Literature Review

Cross-linguistic studies reveal that semantic prosody is universal among languages, and some researchers have scrutinized semantic prosody bilingually for linguistic analysis and/or translation studies [3]; [4]; [5], *inter alia*). However, although translation is a rich field for cross-linguistic analysis of semantic prosody, few studies have explored the topic. Partington (2004) [6] and Xiao and McEnery (2006) [3] noted that synonyms that share the same denotational meaning are not collocationally interchangeable and share different forms of semantic prosody. For example, *cause* is negative, while *bring about* is positive [3]. Partington (1998, p. 77) [7] claimed that 'look-alike' words from different languages have different forms of semantic prosody and collocational behaviour because they evolved in different lexical environments. For example, he mentioned that the English *correct*, and its Italian counterpart *corretto*, are false friends.

Xiao and McEnery (2006) [3] explored the semantic prosody and collocational behaviour of three near-synonym groups cross-linguistically between English and Chinese: the *CONSEQUENCE* group (*CONSEQUENCE, AFTERMATH, OUTCOME, RESULT*), the *CAUSE* group (*CAUSE/BRING ABOUT*), and the *PRICE/COST* groups. Their study defined

near-synonyms as lexical pairs sharing a very close cognitive or denotational meaning; however, they might differ in terms of semantic prosody or collocational behaviour. It indicates that the *CONSEQUENCE* group showed marked differences in semantic prosody. The words ranged from positive to negative along an orderly continuum: *OUTCOME, RESULT, CONSEQUENCE(S),* and *AFTERMATH*. The *CAUSE* group has opposing prosody-negative prosody for *cause* and positive prosody for *BRING ABOUT*. Interestingly, *CAUSE* and *BRING ABOUT* most frequently collocate with the lexical item 'change'. *CAUSE* often represents contexts where change is unwanted or forced, whereas *BRING ABOUT* is more notable in contexts implying positive and pleasant changes. Lastly, the *PRICE* and *COST* groups share similar semantic prosody, suggesting neutral semantic prosody in literal monetary contexts and negative semantic prosody in pragmatic contexts. As for their opposing equivalents in Chinese, they found that both languages exhibit similar collocational behaviour and semantic prosody among near-synonyms. However, synonyms usually are not collocationally interchangeable as they have different forms of semantic prosody. The authors suggest teaching collocational behaviour and semantic prosody to L2 learners to avoid common mistakes of lexical choices among Chinese learners, such as '*the city caused him great interest', a* sentence produced by an upper-intermediate proficiency level Chinese student [3]. Kotait (2016) [8] drew on Xiao and McEnery (2006) [3] and examined the semantic prosody and collocational behaviour of the Arabic equivalent of *price/cost* ثمن/ سعر The results of the study echo the findings of Xiao and McEnery. Arabic and English display similar semantic prosody where both synonyms have a neutral literal meaning and a negative metaphorical meaning.

Dushku and Paek (2021) [9] investigated whether English as a second language (ESL) learners' ability to observe, recognise, and produce semantic prosody correlated with their level of proficiency. Learners took an elicitation and recognition test on 13 verbs. The test measured their ability to conceptualise and produce semantic prosody. They found it more challenging for learners to produce semantic prosody than mere observation and recognition. They concluded that awareness of semantic prosody does not always correlate with proficiency level. Awareness of semantic prosody needs time to manifest significant development.

Partington (1998) [7] deduced that related languages like English and Italian have different degrees of semantic prosody, so they are not equivalent. Furthermore, he stated that non-native speakers of a language, such as translators, find semantic prosody difficult to perceive. Consequently, ignoring semantic prosody during translation from a second language into the translator's native language may lead to misunderstanding the message of the source text (ST) and mistranslating it into the target text (TT). Stewart (2009) [10] also asserted the importance of teaching semantic prosody to translators.

Limited studies have investigated semantic prosody in Arabic–English translations. McGee (2012) [11] explored the use of semantic prosody in written texts produced by native Arabic translation students and English teachers. He concluded that, first, Arabic teachers and students treat semantic prosody differently than native English speakers, producing inappropriate prosodic clashes. Second, awareness of semantic prosody is not associated with a proficiency level in English. In other words, regular teaching methods constricted to classrooms will not help learners predict semantic prosody; instead, it is acquired incidentally through exposure to English outside the classroom. Most Arabic–English studies on semantic prosody focus on translations of the Qur'an. Younis (2011) [12] demonstrated that different degrees of semantic prosody are associated with a single verb in the Qur'an when followed by different prepositions, which affect their expression in English.

Consequently, translators of the Qur'an should use corpus data to cover the context's pragmatic meaning. Other researchers like El Attar (2019) [13] examined the translation of the semantic prosody of three water-related words in the Qur'an: *rain, main,* and *river* (*المطر، النهر، اليم*). *Rain* and *main* contain negative semantic prosody, while *river* carries positive semantic prosody. However, in some cases, the semantic prosody of *rain* and *main* are rendered neutral in English. This underscores the importance of knowing a word's semantic prosody alongside the basic denotational meaning when translating to avoid loss or alteration of meaning. Alshahrani (2020) [14] explored the semantic prosody of words related to natural phenomena in the Qur'an and revealed their communicative and pragmatic functions. She evaluated the translations of the five most prominent English translators of the Qur'an-Pickthall, Ali, Arberry, Saheeh, and Haleem-according to their Arabic–English accuracy in terms of prosody. Alshahrani illustrated this by using references to frequencies, collocations, patterns, and evaluative and discourse prosody. She deduced that Haleem's translation is the most congruent to the Arabic representation of semantic prosody.

Previous studies generally signal that cross-linguistic patterns of semantic prosody between synonyms are not predictable but can be discovered through corpus analysis. Some languages exhibit similar patterns of semantic prosody to English, such as Chinese [3], French [15], and Arabic [8], whereas other languages like Italian, despite their closeness, have resulted in opposite degrees of prosody [7]. A few prior studies emphasize the awareness of semantic prosody among translators in rendering connotational meaning because any neglect of the semantic prosody of the ST may lead to a sense of irony in TT translation [16]. As such, we hope to bridge the gap between semantic prosody and translation studies by measuring whether translation students' awareness of semantic prosody differs according to the direction of the translation, as studies investigating this aspect are scarce.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Participants

The participants of the corpus-driven translation test were 50 upper-level translation students at Princess Nourah bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU). We chose them because they represent the senior level, similar to the level of the students involved in the SauLTC corpus. We also selected 20 students of MA translation at PNU to establish whether language proficiency affects the overall awareness of semantic prosody. All participants provided informed consent before the study began. Finally, we compared the test results to the outcomes obtained from the SauLTC corpus for bidirectional analysis between Arabic and English.

3.2. Instruments

The study used an Arabic-to-English, corpus-driven translation test consisting of 16 items presented in a multiple-choice format. We also used three types of corpora: the SauLTC corpus [17], a multiversion, unidirectional, parallel translation learner corpus, consisting of students' English–Arabic translations; the COCA

corpus, used to extract authentic examples for the test; and the ArabiCorpus, to determine the semantic prosody of the Arabic word list. Other tools, such as expert consultation and dictionaries, were also used.

3.3. Data collection

We adapted Elahi and Rahbar's (2018) [18] corpus-driven test to design the test used in this study to measure students' awareness of semantic prosody. A corpus-driven translation test took the included items from the COCA corpus. In designing the items, we utilized the COCA corpus for authentic materials. We consulted with three translation experts to check the items' clarity as the test's face validity. Then, we spoke with the experts-alongside returning to ArabiCorpus and dictionaries (e.g. ALMAANY)-to identify the proper equivalent in Arabic concerning semantic prosody. Finally, we performed a pilot study by sending a few students the final version of the corpus-driven multiple-choice test to check the clarity of the directions and the items.

The data from SauLTC corpus helped us measure students' awareness of semantic prosody when translating into their L1. As for this corpus, we used a pre-installed concordance tool to analyze the results obtained from the corpus concerning students' translation of the *CONSEQUENCE* and *CAUSE* groups, adapted from Xiao and McEnery (2006) [3] to measure translation students' ability to render semantic prosody. Xiao and McEnery (2006) [3] also examined the *price/cost* groups, but we excluded them as they share similar semantic prosody.

4. Results

We thoroughly investigated the two near-synonym groups. Table 1 presents both groups and states the semantic prosody of each lexical item.

Table 1: Semantic Prosody of The English Words.

Near synonyms	Scholars	SP
Cause	Stubbs, 1995	Negative
Bring about	Louw, 1993	Positive
Outcome	Xiao & McEnery, 2006	Positive
Result		Positive
Consequence		Negative
Aftermath		Negative

We scrutinized the semantic prosody of Arabic words and appropriated the translation of the CONSEQUENCES and CAUSE equivalence in Arabic through the following steps. We first looked up the proper equivalence of the lexical items in Arabic using bilingual dictionaries. We then consulted translation experts on the most suitable equivalent for each lexical item in the CONSEQUENCE and CAUSE groups. Following this, we examined their prosody using corpus data from ArabiCorpus to support the findings. Table 2 shows the final equivalence after considering all three factors.

Table 2: The semantic prosody of the Arabic words.

Near-synonyms	Arabic equivalence	SP of the Arabic words
Cause	يسبب	Negative
	يؤدي الى	Neutral
Bring about	يحدث، احداث (تغيرا)	Positive
Outcome	نتيجة	Neutral
Result	نتيجة	Neutral
Consequence	عاقبة ،عواقب (وخيمة)	Negative
Aftermath	أعقاب ، اثار	Negative

Tables 1 and 2 show that English and Arabic share some similarities in their semantic prosody among some pairs of near-synonyms, although the two languages are unrelated. However, for the pair *OUTCOME* and *RESULT*, Arabic and English show marked differences whereby the English term indicates positive prosody, while its Arabic counterparts display neutral prosody by occurring in both negative and positive situations in equal proportions.

4.1. Corpus Analysis

4.1.1 The CAUSE group

(A) CAUSE

The first group to be examined here is the *CAUSE* group as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Examples of negative collocates with ***cause***, taken from the SauLTC.

ST	TT
Drinking too much fluid or eating foods that cause heartburn. At times, having type 2 diabetes can cause stress, anxiety and even depression.	شرب الكثير من السوائل أو تناول الأطعمة التي تسبب الحرقة. الاصابة بالنوع الثاني من داء السكري يمكن أن يسبب أحياناً الإجهاد والقلق وحتى الاكتئاب.
It can actually cause you more problems than you might think.	يمكن ان يسبب لك مشاكل أكثر مما تتوقع.
Lymphedema can cause discomfort, pain, and limit the use of your arm.	وقد تسبب الوذمة اللمفية عدم الراحة والآلام وتحد من استخدام الذراع.

Most students who scored an average of 98.6% for all levels of English proficiency, as reflected in their grade point average (GPA), translated the correct semantic prosody of the lexical item *CAUSE*, which is *يسبب* (ysbb).

According to ArabiCorpus, *يؤدي إلى* (Yu'addī ilá) is typically neutral; it appears in both negative and positive contexts. Therefore, the English equivalent *lead to* is more similar in affective meaning. *Lead to* mostly has neutral occurrences (Xiao & McEnery, 2006). In SauLTC, few students translated the lexical item *CAUSE* into *يؤدي الى* (Yu'addī ilá), but this does not mean that they mistranslated the semantic prosody. However, *يسبب* is more accurate.

Few students preferred translating the lexical item's semantic prosody into positive prosody. They translated *CAUSE* into *يحدث ، حصول، تدفع، يحوز* (Yaḥduthu, Ḥuṣūl, tadfa'u, yḥwz.). One example taken from the corpus-"The arrival of a newborn child: The birth of a newborn will cause the parents to focus their attention on [the child], subsequently causing their sibling to show signs of jealousy"—was translated into " *ظهور طفل جديد بالعائلة: ظهور الطفل الجديد سوف يحوز كل اهتمام الوالدين وبالتالي تبدأ سلسلة مشاعر الغيرة بالظهور*." This may dilute nuances of meaning in the English sentence.

(B) BRING ABOUT

The lexical item *BRING ABOUT* appeared nine times in SauLTC, and only one sentence had negative semantic prosody (Table 4).

Table 4: Examples of words that collocate with ***bring about***, taken from the SauLTC.

ST	TT
Stress [harms] the body, weakens the immune system, and has the potential to cause minor ailments and to bring about general bodily discomfort	قد يعاقب التوتر الجسد فيضعف الجهاز المناعي ويسبب بعض الأمراض وعدم الراحة البدنية بشكل عام
Having the courage to try and bring about life changes that are important to you.	تملك الشجاعة لإحداث تغييرات مهمة لك
It proves your capacity to bring about desired personal change.	لأنه يثبت قدرتك على إجراء التغييرات الشخصية التي ترغب بها
You may require specialist, professional, or medical help to bring about effective and lasting change.	تحتاج إلى أخصائي ذو خبرة أو مساعدة طبية لإحداث تغيير فعال ودائم

Students across all levels of GPA successfully translated the lexical item *BRING ABOUT* into *يحدث ، احداث ، اجراء (تغير)* (Yaḥduthu, iḥdāth, ijrā' (taghyīr)). This could be due to the existence of an English–Arabic correspondence of the lexical item *BRING ABOUT*. In the first sentence from the table above, where *BRING ABOUT* was associated with a negative context and preceded by *CAUSE*, the student disregarded the translation of the lexical item *BRING ABOUT* and translated the negative prosody of *CAUSE*.

The frequency of *BRING ABOUT* in SauLTC may raise doubts about unreliable findings. However, since *BRING ABOUT* has a direct correspondence from Arabic to English, we believe that the results taken from the multiple-choice test can help support the results of the corpus, as outlined in Section 4.5.

4.1.2. The CONSEQUENCE group

The results obtained from the SauLTC corpus and the corpus-driven translation test revealed a drop in the overall awareness of the semantic prosody of the *CONSEQUENCE* group as opposed to the *CAUSE* group.

(A) OUTCOME

The lexical item *OUTCOME* appeared 97 times in the SauLTC corpus.

Table 5: Examples of words that collocate with ***outcome***, taken from the SauLTC.

ST	TT
An estimation of the likely outcome of an illness based on the patient's current status and available treatments.	هو تقدير للنتيجة المحتملة للمرض بناءً على الحالة الحالية للمريضة والعلاجات المتوفرة
How many times do we allow ourselves to avoid getting things done in our lives simply because we fear what we think the outcome is going to be?	فكم من مرة سمحنا لأنفسنا بأن نفشل لأننا خشينا من عواقب قراراتنا؟
Provide an opinion, do some analysis, and help get the right outcome.	تقديم الرأي، إجراء بعض التحليلات، والمساعدة في الوصول إلى النتيجة المطلوبة.
Make it an attractive outcome: the most perfect remedy.	اجعلها نتيجة ساحرة – العلاج المثالي

All students translated *OUTCOME* into *نتيجة* (Natījat)or its derivations, regardless of prosody. As portrayed in the second example in Table 5 above, only one student with a high GPA changed the translation of *OUTCOME* when it appeared with negative prosody into *عواقب* ('Awāqib), which has negative prosody. According to the ALMAANY dictionary, *نتيجة* (Natījat) means the positive or negative result of something. This indicates that it has neutral semantic prosody and does not share similar prosody to the English lexical item *OUTCOME*.

(B) RESULT

Table 6: Examples of words that collocate with ***result***, taken from the SauLTC.

ST	TT
According to different studies in Japan, China, and Chile, the phytochemical is suspected of producing similar action on Heliobacter pylori, the stomach bacteria that result in peptic ulcers and cancer.	تبعا لأبحاث مختلفة في اليابان والصين وتشيلي فإن المركب النباتي مشبوه بإنتاج فعل مشابه على بكتيريا المعدة هيليوباكتربيلوري والتي تسبب القرحة الهضمية ومرض السرطان
Achievement of your happiness is the only moral purpose of your life, and that happiness, not pain or mindless self-indulgence, is the proof of your moral integrity, since it is the proof and result of your loyalty to the achievement of your values.	"يعتبر تحقيق سعادتك هو الغرض الأخلاقي الوحيد لحياتك وتلك السعادة ليست ألمًا وليست انغماسًا في طيش النفس ولكنها الدليل على نزاهتك الخلقية في حين أنها دليل ونتيجة لولائك لتحقيق قيمك
The idea is that any variation in candidate assessment is a result of the candidate's performance.	وتستخدم المقابلات المنظمة باستمرار في البحث المسحي، فالفكرة هنا هي أن أي اختلاف في تقييم المرشح هو نتيجة لآداء المرشح.

As seen from the first example in Table 6, in the scientific discourse, *RESULT* has negative prosody. In the second and third examples, when *RESULT* had neutral or positive prosody, students with both high and low GPAs translated it into *نتيجة* (Natījat). This implies that the translation students considered the most congruent translation regarding negativity, positivity, and neutrality concerning *RESULT* when translating into Arabic.

(C) CONSEQUENCE(s)

The students treated the lexical item *CONSEQUENCE* differently concerning semantic prosody when it appeared in its singular versus plural form. The students seemed to translate *CONSEQUENCE* into *نتيجة*(Natījat) , which has positive or neutral prosody. However, when it was used in the plural form, *CONSEQUENCES*, the students seemed to translate it into *عواقب* (ʻAwāqib), which tends to have strong negative semantic prosody. Following is an example taken from SauLTC for the two translations of CONSEQUENCE(S), shown in a paragraph where the former is the plural form, and the latter is the singular form:

Table 7: Example taken from the SauLTC corpus for the two translations of consequence(s).

ST	TT
All language professionals have suffered the *consequences* of general malaise about language studies; [it] has long been present among the general public—an inevitable *consequence* (in my view) of two centuries of language teaching in which prescriptivism and purism produced a mentality suspicious of diversity, variation, and change, and a terminology whose Latinate origins crushed the spontaneous interest in the language of most of those who came into contact with it.	كل المحترفين قد عانوا *عواقب* الشعور العام بالضيق بشأن دراسة اللغة والذي طالما كان ظاهراً بين عامة الناس وهو (من وجهة نظري) *نتيجة* حتمية بعد قرنين في تعليم اللغة والتي كان بها الصفاء قد أنتجت عقلية تنزع الى الشك من التنوع والاختلاف والتغيير ومصطلحات بأصول لاتينية قد حطمت الاهتمام العفوي في اللغة من اللذين كانوا على اتصال بها.

The lexical item *CONSEQUENCE* appeared 46 times in SauLTC. The majority of the sentence has negative semantic prosody. The plural form, *CONSEQUENCES*, appeared 97 times in SauLTC. All sentences showed negative semantic prosody.

Table 8: Examples of words that collocate with ***consequences***, taken from the SauLTC.

ST	TT
No one wants to be overweight or suffer the emotional or physical consequences of diabetes or obesity.	لا أحد يريد أن يكون بديناً ويعاني من عواقب جسمانية وعاطفية من السكري و السمنة.
Because my auctions were timed, there were very real consequences for missing deadlines. The demands of eBay put me on the strictest schedule I'd ever endured.	فمطالب موقع اي باي وضعتني في جدول زمني ضيق جداً، فمزاداتي على الإنترنت كان لها وقت محدد.و كانت هناك عواقب وخيمة عند تأخري عن الوقت المحدد.
Failure to do so can lead to delays, cost increases, unexpected issues, and other negative consequences, including projects being cancelled.	يمكن أن يؤدي الفشل في ذلك إلى تمديد الخط الزمني ورفع التكاليف بشكل فعلي وحدوث مشكلات غير متوقعة وغيرها من التأثيرات السلبية المحتملة كإلغاء عملية مشروع

The majority of students of all proficiency levels, around 95%, translated *CONSEQUENCES* into (ʻAwāqib) *عواقب*. Few students— both with high and low GPAs—fell short of conveying the negative semantic prosody. The last example from the table above is from a student with a high GPA. The meaning of the sentence is correct, but the word *التأثيرات*(al-Ta'thīrāt) —which literally translates into *effects*—does not convey the negativity of the prosody of *CONSEQUENCES* as opposed to *عواقب* (ʻAwāqib).

(D) AFTERMATH

In SauLTC, *AFTERMATH* occurred only four times, and all translations were produced by students with high GPA.

Table 9: Examples of words that collocate with ***aftermath***, taken from SauLTC.

ST	TT
At first, she thought her lethargy was the aftermath of a particularly severe cold she'd had, but her low mood wasn't shifting.	في البداية إعتقدت أن هذا الكسل كان نتيجة لنزلة البرد الحادة التي تعرضت لها، ولكن مزاجها المنخفض لم يتغير.
Those of you who are keeping score at home: The aftermath of our Year of No Sugar consisted of me being plagued by fears.	إذاً لأولئك منكم الذين يتابعون نتائج تجربتنا في منازلهم، تتضمن حصيلة عامنا الخالي من السكر عدة مخاوف
Traffic, causing me to be late, and the aftermath in [the] office [based on the above].	الزحام الذي يسبب التأخير والأمور التي تحصل في المكتب
Are you working through the aftermath of a bereavement?	هل تعاني من فقدان شخص عزيز عليك حالياً؟

Table 9 illustrates that very few students translated the semantic meaning of *AFTERMATH* as something that results or follows from an event. One of them translated *AFTERMATH* into *تتضمن حصيلة*(tataḍammanu ḥaṣīlat), which represents positive prosody instead of *عاقبة*(ʿĀqibah) , which has negative prosody, causing the loss of some nuances of meaning. Fewer students preferred to translate *AFTERMATH* into *and* in the sentence "Traffic, causing me to be late, and the aftermath in [the] office [based on the above]," resulting in " *الزحام الذي يسبب التأخير والأمور التي تحصل في المكتب*" The last student disregarded the translation of *AFTERMATH* completely. Briefly, none of the students translated the semantic prosody of *AFTERMATH*.

In the *CAUSE* group, students' translation performance of the near-synonyms *CAUSE* and *BRING ABOUT* was 98.6% and 100%, respectively. In the CONSEQUENCE group, students' translation performance of the near-synonyms *CONSEQUENCE*, *RESULT*, *OUTCOME*, and *AFTERMATH* was 90%, 100%, 100%, and 0%, respectively. The Eta statistical analysis, conducted to measure the strength of the correlation between students' proficiency level and translation performance, revealed a weak correlation of 0.123.

Table 10: Eta analysis of the SauLTC corpus.

Directional Measures			
			Value
Nominal by interval	Eta	GPA: independent	.512
		Score: dependent	.123

According to Table 10 above, the degree of correlation is .123, that is, lower than 0.5, which signals a weak correlation. Consequently, from the percentages of overall performance and the Eta statistical measures, the translation students exhibited a high degree of awareness of semantic prosody when translating into their L1, regardless of their proficiency level.

4.2. Multiple Choice Translation Test

In building upon the work of Elahi and Rahbar (2018), we designed an 18 corpus-driven, multiple-choice translation test that includes pairs of near-synonyms taken from the *CONSEQUENCE* and *CAUSE* groups. The pairs have the same denotational meaning, but different forms of semantic prosody where one is positive and the other is negative, such as *CAUSE* versus *BRING ABOUT*.

The method used to examine the results obtained from the data extracted includes the percentage of the correct choice of equivalents based on denotational meanings of English lexical items. The findings provide data on the relationship between language proficiency and the awareness of semantic prosody.

4.2.1 The CAUSE Group

(A) CAUSE

The first test items present the near-synonyms *CAUSE* and *BRING ABOUT* (see Appendix) and entail the appropriate selection of equivalents based on their semantic prosody behavior (negative or positive).

As shown above, the target words collocate with the negative words *damage*, *frustration*, and *cancer*, respectively. Thus, the appropriate choice, as the semantic prosody equivalent for the underlined Arabic word, would be *CAUSE* so that it can convey the negative semantic sense from the ST to the TT.

Table 11: Total results selected by the students for the near synonym ***cause*** in the same order of the test.

	True	False	Both	Total number of correct answers
MA	11	5	--	
BA	22	3	2	33/43
MA	13	3	--	36/43
BA	23	3	1	
MA	15		1	40/43
BA	1 25		1	

As Table 11 illustrates, both groups obtained very similar outcomes concerning the semantic prosody of *CAUSE*. However, since the verb *CAUSE* has a higher frequency compared to *BRING ABOUT*, its negative prosody is demonstrated clearly by the higher proficiency MA students.

(B) BRING ABOUT

Conversely, the items above the target words collocate with a positive context, as in *fight climate change*, *exciting, investments*, and *uplift immigrants*, respectively. Therefore, the appropriate choice, as the equivalent for the underlined Arabic lexical items, would be *BRING ABOUT* so that it can convey the positive semantic sense from the ST to the TT

Table 12: Total Results Selected by the Students for the Near Synonym ***Bring About*** in the Same Order of the Test.

	True	False	Both	Total number of correct answers
MA	8	3	5	
BA	18	6	3	26/43
MA	12	--	4	25/43
BA	13	6	8	
MA	9	3	4	20/43
BA	9 11		7	

As Tables 11 and 12 indicate, the statistical analysis shows that MA and BA students exhibited awareness of semantic prosody in the verb *CAUSE*. This could be due to the high frequency of the verb; the students were familiar with its semantic prosody. In contrast, both groups obtained much lower results concerning the semantic prosody of *BRING ABOUT* compared to *CAUSE*. Notwithstanding, overall, the MA students showed higher awareness of the positive prosody of *BRING ABOUT*.

The second test item presents the near-synonym pairs of the *CONSEQUENCE* group (see the Appendix), arranged along the following continuum from most negative to most positive: *AFTERMATH, CONSEQUENCE, RESULT*, and *OUTCOME*. It analyses the appropriate selection of equivalents based on the semantic prosody behaviors of these words, rooted in the negativity or positivity of thrtideir collocates in the sentence.

As shown above, in items 1–3, the target words collocate with negative words as *death*, *storm*, and *catastrophe*, respectively. Thus, the appropriate choice, as the equivalent for the underlined Arabic word, would be *AFTERMATH* with negative semantic prosody in these three items so that it can convey the negative sense of the entire sentence from the ST to the TT.

Similarly, in items 4–6, the target words collocate with the negative words *eating candy*, *killing*, *mistake*, and *bad decisions*, respectively. As such, the appropriate choice, as the equivalent for the underlined Arabic word, would be *CONSEQUENCES* since it holds negative semantic prosody in these three items so that it can convey the negative sense of the entire sentence from the source text to the TT.

Contrastingly, in items 7–9, the target words collocate with the positive words *better*, *expanding economy*, and *finer control*, respectively. Hence, the appropriate choice, as the equivalent for the underlined Arabic lexical item, would be *RESULT* with positive semantic prosody in these three items so that it can convey the positive sense of the entire sentence from the ST to the TT.

Finally, in items 10–12, the target words also collocate with the positive words *promising* and *positive*, respectively. As such, the appropriate choice, as the equivalent for the underlined Arabic word, would be *OUTCOME* with positive semantic prosody in these three items so that it can convey the positive sense of the entire sentence from the source text to the TT.

Table 13: Equivalents selected by students for the near synonym ***aftermath*** in the same order of the test.

	True	False	Both	Total number of correct answers
MA	9	4	3	
BA	18	7	2	27/43
MA	10	3	3	17/43
BA	7	13	7	
MA	10	3	3	21/43
BA	9 11		7	

As Table 13 illustrates, the negative semantic prosody of *AFTERMATH* was the least appropriately translated among the groups. Most BA translation students failed to pay attention to the negative semantic prosody of the collocates of *AFTERMATH*. This could be due to the lack of one-to-one correspondence of the English *AFTERMATH* in Arabic. Additionally, the lower use and frequency of the lexical item *AFTERMATH* over the word *CONSEQUENCES*—which will be examined subsequently—may influence cognitive awareness of the negative prosody of the lexical item.

Table 14: Equivalents selected by the students for the near synonym ***consequence**s* in the same order of the test.

	True	False	Both	Total number of correct answers
MA	13	--	3	
BA	20	4	3	35/43
MA	12	1	3	26/43
BA	14	6	7	
MA	14	--	2	30/43
BA	6 16		5	

As Table 14 indicates, despite the higher frequency of use of *CONSEQUENCES*, the BA translation students showed a lack of awareness of the negative prosody and it collocates. MA students exhibited a higher awareness with only a few incorrect answers.

Table 15: Equivalents selected by the students for the near synonym ***result*** in the same order of the test.

	True	False	Both	Total number of correct answers
MA	12	--	4	
BA	26	--	1	38/43
MA	16	--	--	36/43
BA	20	4	3	
MA	15	1	--	37/43
BA	2 22		3	

As Table 15 illustrates, the positive semantic prosody of *RESULT* was the most appropriately translated among the groups. The majority of the BA and MA translation students successfully chose *RESULT* as the correct translation of the Arabic equivalent, thus demonstrating awareness of the positive semantic prosody of the collocates of *RESULT*. Specifically, the MA students' overall translation performance was superior for this particular prosody. This could be due to the high-frequency use of the lexical item *RESULT* or that the Arabic equivalent نتيجة (Natījat) has neutral semantic prosody. Furthermore, it has a direct one-to-one correspondence with *RESULT*. Therefore, the reason behind the high percentage of correct answers, as opposed to the other words of the same group, is not the cognitive awareness of prosody. Rather, it is because of the one-to-one correspondence between the English *RESULT* and the Arabic نتيجة (Natījat).

Table 16: Equivalents selected by the students for the near synonym ***outcome*** in the same order of the test.

	True	False	Both	Total number of correct answers
MA	15	1	--	
BA	20	7	--	35/43
MA	14	1	1	29/43
BA	15	9	3	
MA	14	--	2	36/43
BA	2 22		3	

As Table 16 depicts, there is a clear difference between the overall performance of the MA and BA translation students regarding the translation of the semantic prosody of the lexical item *OUTCOME*. Out of the MA students, all but three displayed awareness of the semantic prosody of *OUTCOME*, and almost half of BA students expressed the opposite.

4.3. Overall View of Awareness of the Arabic-to-English Semantic Prosody

In the *CAUSE* group, students' translation performance of the near-synonyms *CAUSE* and *BRING ABOUT* was 87.5% and 55.3%, respectively. In the consequence group, students' translation performance of the near-synonyms *CONSEQUENCE*, *RESULT*, *OUTCOME*, and *AFTERMATH* was 70.2%, 86%, 77.2%, and 50.9% respectively. The Eta statistical analysis, conducted to measure the strength of the correlation between students' proficiency level and translation performance, revealed a weak correlation of 0.344. The relationship is strong if the value is equal to 0.5 or higher; 1 equals an absolute correlation.

Table 17: Eta analysis of the Multiple-choice translation test.

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by interval	Eta	Proficiency level: independent value	.497
		Score: dependent value	.344

According to Table 17, the degree of correlation is .344, lower than 0.5, indicating a weak correlation. Consequently, from the percentages of the students' overall performance and the Eta statistical measures, we can conclude that the translation students exhibited less awareness of semantic prosody when translating into English versus into Arabic, regardless of proficiency level.

5. Discussion

This section discusses the results in light of the research questions. The first research question was: How do Arabic translation students address the problem of translating semantic prosody of near-synonyms? Based on the corpus analysis, we can conclude that the PNU translation students generally tended to exhibit some degree of awareness of semantic prosody of near-synonyms during their translation of high-frequency lexical items such as *CAUSE*, *CONSEQUENCE*, and *RESULT*, whereby the students tended to interpret semantic prosody accurately. However, we observed that the students seemed to disregard semantic prosody during the translation of less frequently used lexical items such as *AFTERMATH* and *BRING ABOUT*; this outcome aligns with the findings of Dushku and Paek (2021) [9].

The second research question tries to investigates whether Arabic translation students display better awareness of semantic prosody when translating into Arabic than while translating into English. The Arabic translation students seemed to have a better distinction of the semantic prosody of near-synonyms when translating from English into Arabic (i.e. into their L1). Moreover, the translation students are aware of the semantic print in the context and translated it accordingly, as when a student translated the sentence in a scientific article, "to *bring about* general bodily discomfort," into "يسبب عدم الراحة" (ysbb 'adam al-Rāḥah). *BRING ABOUT* occurred in a negative context, and the student translated the equivalent, which holds the same negative prosody that is يسبب (ysbb). This aligns with Partington's (1998) [7] conclusion that semantic prosody is easily perceived by native speakers (i.e. native Arabic translation students translating into Arabic).

The third research question was as follows: Does the student's proficiency level correlate with their choice of appropriate equivalents concerning semantic prosody? According to the Eta statistical measures, there is a weak correlation between students' proficiency level and awareness of semantic prosody. This result does not align with Elahi and Rahbar (2018) [18], who revealed a strong relationship between semantic prosody and language proficiency. However, we agree with Dushku and Paek (2021) [9] and McGee (2012) [11], who refuted the correlation between semantic prosody and one's level of English, and stressed digressing from regular classroom constricted methods of teaching English to help learners to predict semantic prosody, and showing patience because awareness of semantic prosody needs time. Finally, our initial test analysis indicates that overall, MA students performed better for less frequently used words in terms of awareness of semantic prosody. Based on the observation, we might argue that this is not due to their language proficiency; one possible explanation for this outcome might be because MA students have more years of exposure to English than BA students.

6. Conclusion

This analysis of L2 learners' semantic prosody awareness adds to our knowledge on this insufficiently explored topic that has recently piqued the interest of translation scholars. This study confirms that learners tend to notice semantic prosody more when translating into their L2 than their L1.

The study fills methodology gaps in collocation research by examining L2 learners' semantic prosody awareness through the learner corpus and a corpus-driven test across proficiency levels. The findings of this cross-linguistic analysis imply that semantic prosody is unpredictable. The Arabic translation students showed some awareness of semantic prosody among near-synonyms in high-frequency words, in students' translations from English to Arabic and vice versa. Our findings that students are more aware of semantic prosody when translating into their L1 align with previous literature [6]. There is a weak relationship between proficiency level and awareness of semantic prosody, but the literature implies that the time of exposure to a particular language is more influential [11].

This study was subject to some limitations. The cross-linguistic analysis was limited to two groups of near-synonyms with known semantic prosody tendencies (the *CONSEQUENCE* and *CAUSE* groups). In addition, the study could have benefitted from a mixed methods approach and relying on informant introspection (Granger, 1998). A think-aloud protocol could have been used to tap into learners' understanding of implicit semantic prosody. Such qualitative data could have shed light on potential factors other than proficiency level that might account for learners' test performance. Finally, the absence of a range of significantly sized L1 groups also limited the study's focus.

Future research could benefit from performance analysis of more advanced L2 students to better understand the correlation between learners' proficiency level and semantic prosody awareness in various contexts. Other factors, such as L1 and L2 reading exposure and practices, learning strategies, and potential congruency between L1 and English patterns, could also be further explored [11].

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Appendix

The CAUSE Group	**(A) CAUSE**	The translation items provided for students on the test were as follows: **A. cause B. bring about C. both**	
		1. Misinformation can actually ……. ecological damage.	يمكن أن تسبب المعلومات المضللة ضررًا بيئيًا.
		2. Shopping in heels will probably ……. you more frustration than they are worth.	قد يسبب التسوق في الكعب العالي إرهاقا أكثر مما يستحق.
		4. A change in the DNA could……. cancer.	أي تغيير في الحمض النووي يمكن أن يسبب سرطان
	(B) BRING ABOUT		
		The thought of having them joining in the effort to.....an energy revolution to fight climate change is very exciting.	إن فكرة مشاركتهم في الجهود المبذولة لإحداث ثورة في الطاقة لمكافحة تغير المناخ أمر مثير للغاية
		The private sector needs both money (savings) and confidence in order to …. another investment.	يحتاج القطاع الخاص إلى المال -المدخرات- والثقة من أجل إحداث دورة استثمار أخرى.
		The president has the power to…….. change that will uplift immigrants instead of locking them up	لدى الرئيس السلطة لإحداث التغيير الذي من شأنه النهوض بالمهاجرين بدلاً من حبسهم.
The CONSEQUENCE group	**aftermath/consequence(s)**	The translation items provided for the students on the test were as follows: **A) outcome(s)/result(s) b) aftermath/consequence(s) c) both**	
		Two thousand were killed in the …… of her death as Sikhs and Hindus fought.	قُتل ألفان في أعقاب وفاتها بينما كان السيخ والهندوس تقاتلان.
		Americans all across the country are watching the …….. of this storm	يراقِب الأمريكيون في جميع أنحاء البلاد آثار هذه العاصفة.
		It is well documented that women suffer disproportionately in numerous ways in the …….. of natural catastrophes	تثبت الوثائق جيدًا أن المرأة تعاني معاناة شديدة من نواح عديدة في أعقاب الكوارث الطبيعية.
		Ask yourself, "Do I want the …….. of eating a candy bar every afternoon for the next year?"	اسأل نفسك'هل أريد عواقب تناول الحلوى بعد ظهر كل يوم للعام المقبل؟
		The emotional ……. of her killing is just the tip of the iceberg	العواقب العاطفية لقتلها ليست سوى غيض من فيض.
	outcome(s)/result(s)	This bad decision is a/an …… of the same mistake that resulted in many of the bad decisions of the new administration.	تبعات الخطأ نفسه الذي نجم هذا القرار السيء أحد عنه العديد من القرارات السيئة للإدارة الجديدة.
		Americans told the Pew Research Center that they expected race relations to get better as a ……. of Obama's election.	أخبر الأمريكيون مركز بيو للأبحاث أنهم يتوقعون أن تتحسن العلاقات العرقية نتيجة لانتخاب أوباما.
		The ……. is a steadily expanding economy that will set the record for the longest expansion ever.	والنتيجة هي نمو اقتصادي ثابت من شأنه أن يسجل رقماً قياسياً لأطول توسع على الإطلاق.
		This approach will yield a much better …… as it offers much finer control.	سوف يسفر هذا النهج عن نتيجة أحسن بكثير، حيث أنه يقدم تحكما أفضل.
		The marketing consultant said that Out Now's research pointed to a possible promising ……..	قال مستشار التسويق: أشار بحث اوت ناو الى نتيجة واعدة ممكنة
		There is a positive …….. from this thought; I have paved the way for my nieces and nephews to follow.	1. ومع ذلك ، هناك نتيجة إيجابية من هذا؛ فقد مهدت الطريق ليتبعه أبناء إخوتي وأخوتي.
		Apparently, the FBI has got a 70% positive……..	الظاهر أنه حصل مكتب التحقيقات الأمريكية على . نتيجة ايجابية بنسبة سبعين بالمية