

MultiLing 2013: Arabic Language

Mahmoud El-Haj: Lancaster University

Ans Alghamdi (Essex University, UK)

Maha Althobaiti (Essex University, UK)

Ahmad Alharthi (King Saud University, Saudi Arabia)

Arabic Team and Participants



- Organised jointly by Lancaster University and the University of Essex in the United Kingdom.
- 20 people participated in translating the English corpus into Arabic, validating the translation and summarising the set of related Arabic articles.
- The participants are studying, or have finished a university degree in an Arabic speaking country.
- The participants' **age ranged between 21 and 32 years old.**

Time per Task

TRANSLATION

- Reading the English news articles was 5.58 minutes.
- Translating these articles 42.18 minutes
- Validating each of the translated Arabic articles the participants took 5.25 minutes on average.

SUMMARISATION

- Reading the set of related articles (10 articles/set) 34.44 minutes
- Summarising each set was 25.41 minutes

General Problems and Challenges



- Lack of Arab participants.
- Lack of funding.
- Communication problems.

Specific Problems and Challenges-1



Month Names

- There are two ways of translating month names into Arabic:
 1. using the Arabic transliteration of the Aramic (Syriac) month “ names (e.g. “May”, “آيار”, “Ayyar”).
 2. using the Arabic transliteration of the English month names (e.g. “May”, “مايو” , “Mayo”).

Specific Problems and Challenges-2



Ambiguity

- “She said Iranian security Chief Saeed Jalili had requested a meeting in a telephone call”.
- The translators (who are Native Arabic speakers) found it a bit hard to choose between two translations:
- “Saeed Jalili asked to schedule a telephone meeting”
- “Saeed Jalili phoned to request a meeting”.

Specific Problems and Challenges-3



English and Task related

1. The use of passive voice, metaphors and idioms
E.g. (“Out of the blue”, “dot the i's and cross the t's”).
1. 250 words not enough.
2. Translating Proper-nouns(Francois Hollande)
3. Abstractive or Extractive