

Lexical Challenges of Business Translation with Reference to English and Arabic: A Product-Oriented Approach

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to investigate the different types of challenges and obstacles that translators encounter in translating business and economic documents, with special attention given to the translation products of tenders and bids from English into Arabic. To meet the study's aims, four business documents for tenders and bids were collected from a variety of national and international non-governmental humanitarian organizations, such as bilingual specialised texts published in Iraq, particularly in Erbil, Kurdistan Region, between 2019 and 2020. The study relies on Holmes' map (1988) of descriptive translation studies; this framework was developed by Toury (1995). The study employs the analytical-descriptive translation methodology in analysing business texts.

Keywords: Business Translation, Lexical Problems, lexical collocations, Product-Oriented Approach, Descriptive Translation Study.

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التحديات المعجمية لترجمة النصوص التجارية مع الإشارة إلى اللغتين

الإنجليزية والعربية: نهج موجه نحو المنتج

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الملخص:-

تهدف الدراسة الى استكشاف الأنواع المختلفة من التحديات والعقبات التي يواجهها المترجمون في ترجمة الوثائق التجارية والاقتصادية، مع التركيز على الوثائق المترجمة للمناقصات والعطاءات التجارية من الإنجليزية إلى العربية. وتركز الدراسة على التحديات والمشكلات التي تظهر أثناء تحليل النصوص على المستويات المعجمية وتوصي ببدائل أفضل لمنتج الترجمة بالإضافة إلى اقتراح حلول مناسبة للتغلب على التحديات والعقبات في ترجمة النصوص التجارية والاقتصادية. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم جمع عينة مكونة من أربع وثائق تجارية من المناقصات والعطاءات من مجموعة مختلفة من المنظمات غير الحكومية الوطنية والدولية، كنصوص متخصصة ثنائية اللغة والتي تم نشرها في العراق وعلى وجه الخصوص في أربيل، إقليم كردستان بين عامين ٢٠١٩ و ٢٠٢٠ واعتمدت الدراسة على خريطة هولمز (١٩٨٨) لدراسات الترجمة الوصفية باعتبارها واحدة من المجالات الأساسية للدراسة في مجال دراسات الترجمة البحتة والتي طورها توري عام(١٩٩٥).

كلمات مفتاحية: ترجمة نصوص الأعمال التجارية، المشاكل المعجمية ، المتلازمات المعجمية ، منتج الترجمة ، النهج الموجه نحو المنتج ، الترجمة المتخصصة ، نصوص الاعمال التجارية ، دراسة الترجمة الوصفية.

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Introduction:-

In the new global economy, translation has become an increasingly important area in business translation; these rapid changes in business and the economy have led to the need for specialised translators. Moreover, the translation of business texts involving subject-specific knowledge, using specialised terminology, having a specific communicative purpose, and addressing a specific audience is referred to as "specialist translation".

In addition, terminology plays an important role in all types of translation, giving the text specific characteristics. Byrne stated that "terminology is, perhaps, the most immediately noticeable aspect of a technical text, and indeed, it gives the text the "fuel" it needs to convey the information". (2006, p. 3). Furthermore, terminology plays a significant role in ensuring effective communication between source and target languages in business and economic texts. As Pozzi pointed out, "Terminology plays a decisive role in technical and scientific communication; the more precise and economic the terminology is the more efficient the communication process will be, as there will be no room for subjective interpretations or misinterpretations". (1996, p. 71).

Furthermore, lexical and terminological challenges are one of the common problems that the study seeks to investigate in the translation of business and economic texts through the answers to the research questions, how does a translator deal with specialised terminologies and expressions in the translation of business tenders and bids, and what role and effect do lexical changes play in business and economic translation products?.

1.1 Theoretical background

Translation might fall into one of two categories, as drawn out by the specialised Dictionary of Translation Studies (Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997, p. 181). The first one can refer to the process, as Catford (1965, 1) defines translation as "a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another," while the second can refer to the product (translated text), which means the text that has been translated. Holmes noted that "there had been longstanding efforts to produce theories for the translation of literary or sacred texts, but that attempts to develop theories for the translation of scientific texts were relatively new" (Holmes, 1988, p.180). Moreover, the obvious contributions of Holmes have been described by Palumbo, who stated that "the work of Holmes (1924–1986) has exerted an enormous influence on the development and consolidation of translation studies as a discipline in its own right." (Palumbo, 2009, p. 15).

In addition to his contribution, Holmes believes that the other primary branch of "pure" theoretical translation studies is the one that uses the findings from descriptive research and combines them with data from related fields, such as linguistics, literary studies, or information theory, in order "to evolve principles, theories, and models which will serve to explain and predict what translating and translations are and will be" (Holmes, 1988/2004, pp. 177–178). Moreover, business translation uses specific terminology, language, style therefore, it can be classified within specialized languages, which contain varieties of expressions of metaphors, idioms and special terminology. The common problem related to business and economics terminologies is the poor understanding of their terminologies by non-specialists According to Holmes's scheme (1988, p.72), descriptive translation studies are classified into three orientations:

- *Product-oriented*, which describes existing translations.
- *Function-oriented*, which focuses on the function of translations within the target socio-cultural system.
- *Process-oriented*, which is concerned with the act of translating itself.

According to the theory's concept, which has been mentioned, Bell (1991, p. 26) proposed three possible theories of translation depending on the focus of the investigation:

١. A theory of translation as process (i.e. a theory of translating). This would require a study of information processing and, within that, such topics as (a) perception, (b) memory and (c) the encoding and decoding of messages, and would draw heavily on psychology and on psycholinguistics.
٢. A theory of translation as product (i.e. a theory of translated texts). This would require a study of texts not merely by means of the traditional levels of linguistic analysis (syntax and semantics) but also making use of stylistics and recent advances in text-linguistics and discourse analysis.
٣. A theory of translation as both process and product (i.e. a theory of translating and translation). This would require the integrated study of both, and such a general theory is, presumably, the long-term goal for translation studies. Therefore, the study takes into consideration a theory and model of translation product.

١,٢ Literature Review

Despite the significant progress that has been made in business translation, numerous important issues remain to be explored or resolved. Therefore, the study seeks to highlight several of the problems of previous approaches or methods through translating business and economic texts. Several studies investigating the translation of business and economic texts have been carried out.

In their study, Al-Sohbani and Muthanna titled "Challenges of Arabic-English Translation: The Need for Re-Systematic Curriculum and Methodology Reforms in Yemen" (2013), revealed several challenges that impede the translation process quality of Arabic-English translation and vice versa. In addition, they classified major challenges into four main types: lexical knowledge insufficiency, inadequate knowledge and practice of grammar, little cultural backgrounds, and inappropriate teaching atmosphere and methodology. In their study, they also referred to the general problem related to the difficulty in choosing the exact equivalent terms in both languages due to the different language settings and families. As Ghazala stated, "Problems of translation are mainly caused by grammar, words, style and sounds" (1995, p.1). Their study made several important contributions to business translation study, and there are many similarities between their study and the present study in terms of translating business terminology and the research of challenges which translators face when translating specialized terms. However, it also differs from the current study. Despite both studies are descriptive translation studies, which refer to Holmes's 'map' of translation study, the current study has taken a product-oriented approach. Another distinction point is the fact that this study deals with business parallel texts which have been translated from English into Arabic, while the previous study relied on the questionnaire tools to study the difficulties and challenges in translation.

Several studies investigating translation of business and economic have been carried out. The most relevant research is the study titled "*Problems in Translating Economic Terminology from English into Arabic and vice versa*" which was conducted by (Imam and et al., 2020). In their study, they attempted to explore and solve the major challenges in translating business and economic documents, such as lexical problems and their effect on translating business terminology, which is one of the problematic issues in translation business texts. They focused on frequent use of metaphoric expressions, collocations, lexical problems and equivalence in business texts. Moreover, they pointed out that the major difficulty for non-specialized

translators in translating business and economic texts is specialized terminology. There is a great deal of similarity between the research mentioned above and the current study, both of which introduced Holmes' Map as foundation of the TS as well as Reiss and Newmark's text typology (Reiss, 2000, p. 24). Furthermore, it shows the lexical analysis of a few economic terminologies. However, it's markedly different from the previous study which focused on business media discourse translation process. Unlike it, the present study is focused on product oriented approach according to Holmes' Map of translation studies. The present study is oriented to works on contract, bids, tenders and business agreements based on Holmes map of translation studies, taking into account lexical problems, stylistic, semantic and collocations in business texts.

According to the articles and studies mentioned above, several studies investigating the translation of business and economics have been carried out. The majority of the available research describes finding equivalence in the TL as the main problem in translating business and economic texts. Moreover, the majority of the article mentioned previously is related to the process of business and economic translation rather than the translation product. Therefore, It can be said that business and economic translation is one of the controversial issues among translators, linguistics and theorists in translation studies, due to the variety of problems with specialised translation and the difficulty of translation in this field, such as lexical, syntactic, polysemy, semantic, collocations, and cultural differences between SL and TL texts etc. To the best of our knowledge, it can be seen that research in this area has been limited, the few researchers writing in the field of business translation deal specifically with the product translation and challenges faced by the translator. Therefore, the present study attempted to investigate the challenges and limitations of Business Translation from English into Arabic language through the product oriented approach.

۲. Methodology

In regards to theoretical method and the framework for the study's analysis, it is based on the Holmes (product-oriented) theory of translation study (Holmes, 1988, p. 72), which was developed as a descriptive translation study by Toury (1995, p. 10). Its purpose was to be an analytical and descriptive translation study of the product-oriented approach to translating business and economic documents from English into Arabic.

The method of analytical descriptive has been applied to the examination of the content analysis (text-based analysis) of the selected Arabic texts translated from English business texts in order to find out the main lexical problems and challenges in the translation product. Moreover, an analytical approach to the qualitative aspect has been employed in this study. Since this study is focused on the product of translation and is an analysis of the translated texts of the same ST, it is a "descriptive" study.

In addition, the study follows the translation product-oriented model to analyse the differences between the meanings of the translated business texts and the original English texts. According to Nord, the comparison of ST and TT, as well as translation criticism, "can be based on the model of translation-oriented text analysis" (Nord, 2005/1991, p. 182). The model is basically based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958/1995, p. 31) classification of direct and oblique translations and consists of a comparative model and a descriptive model. Therefore, the model that has been used to detect the lexical challenges that translators face might lead to changing the meaning from that expressed in the original English business texts, or the language of the translated text might be far from the specialised translation that appears in quality assessment of translation products. The study's scope was limited to an examination of four business documents for tenders, bids, and supplies, which were published by some national and international non-governmental humanitarian organizations and translated from English into Arabic and which are presented in a table at the end of the study (Table 1). The selection of business and economic texts has been based on a non-random sampling that has been focused on business purposes for two years, which are 2019 and 2020 in Iraq, specifically in Erbil, Kurdistan Region. It is worth mentioning that some parts of the original English texts and their translations into Arabic were not included in the study, as some of them were omitted or completely cut out. (e.g., a sentence or paragraph, names, contact numbers, address) was deleted altogether due to the property of information and confidentiality, and also the study has used the symbol (.....) which means some information has been deleted or hidden for the same purpose mentioned above.

٣. Data Analysis and discussion

This section is about the data analysis and discussion of the business translation texts, which sheds light on the challenges and limitations that appear in providing an accurate translation

product that uses a number of business and economic texts, with special concentration given to the terminologies and the lexical of bids and tenders that have been extracted from business documents. The data analysis and discussions cover various areas of problems and challenges, including terminologies and lexical in order to investigate the major difficulties that translators faced in translating business and economic texts.

٣,١ Lexical Problems and Challenges

Lexical problems usually appear as a result of the diversity of languages, and when a word's or expression's meaning in the language is unclear or the translator is unfamiliar with the terminology, such as specialised terminology, synonymy, polysemy, translating collocations, etc (Ghazala, 1995, p.24). Consequently, these obstacles can impact the meaning of the translation of business and economic terms.

٣,١,١ Specialized Terminology

The challenges that a translator may face when dealing with business and economic documents include difficulty in understanding the notions and terminologies because of the complex sentences. Specialized terminology is what makes business texts difficult for non-specialized translator. The terminology of business texts consists of a wide range of economic, trade, financial, banking, political and other terms.

Table 1: Special Terminology

ST2	TT2
3- Offers must be valid for 4 month.	3- يجب ان تكون العطاء نافذة لمدة 4 اشهر
4- Only the livestock specialized Companies or Agriculture or general trading companies that have experience and similar work will be considered (other companies will exclude and do not enter competition).	4- فقط الشركات المتخصصة في مجال المواشي والزراعية وشركات التجارة العامة التي لديها خبرة و اعمال مماثلة سوف تؤخذ بنظر الاعتبار (الشركات الاخرى تستبعد و لا تدخل المنافسة).

Table 1 is taken from a call for tender purchase which was announced by one of the NGOs in ٢٠٢٠. The first example of Arabic text shows the translation of the term "offers" translated as (العطاء). However, the analysis of the text shows that the translator may have faced a challenge when trying to find a suitable equivalent for the term mentioned in the target language text,

which is one of the most common terms in business and economic terminology. According to *Interpreter's thematic dictionary: ... Accounting, commercial, Economic, finance ... expressions; English-Arabic* (Abdul-Raof, 2005, p. 134), It may have been better to render the term into (عروض) as a special term for "offers", because the Arabic version shows the translation of business term (العطاء) meaning (bid), which means an offer to buy or the highest price a prospective bidder is prepared to pay, as defined by *The Ultimate Business Dictionary: Defining the World of Work* (2003, p. 32). On the other hand, (offers) means an amount of money that somebody is willing to pay for something, as it is mentioned in *the Oxford Business English Dictionary: For Learners of English* (Parkinson, & Noble, 2005, p. 371). Therefore, having a good command of business and economic terminology has an impact on the quality of the translation product.

Table 2: General Terminology

ST2	TT2
Notice to <u>suppliers</u> 1-(NGO) may reduce or increase the quantity of any item before the awarding date	ملاحظة الى المقاولين 1. قد تقوم (المنظمة) بتقليص او زيادة اية مادة قبل تاريخ الاحالة

Table 2 shows the translation of the term "suppliers" rendered by the translator as (المقاولين), which is a more general term and it can be used for general contracts and in one or more subject filed of activities because the back-translation of the Arabic expression is "contractors," which, according to the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (2007, p. 321), is a person or company whose job it is to provide goods or do work for another person, organization, company, etc. at a particular price. In order to be more precise in the choice of business terminology, it could have been better if the English term was translated as (المزودن او المجهزون) which is mentioned in a specialized dictionary called *Glossary of Commercial, Economic & Financial Terms* (Joreige, 2002, p.151). Moreover, business terminology is a problematic issue to deal with, especially for non-professional translators. Since many terms used within business texts have specific meanings but have ambiguous or general connotations in common English. As Altarabin (2022, p. 07), pointed out, "business texts can include words which have different meanings when used in a general sense". Therefore, dealing with terminology in specialized

translation is quite often a challenging task and may require much more attention and creativity from the translator in order to create a suitable and accurate translation

Table 3: Different Terminology

ST4	TT4
<p>INSTRUCTIONS TO THE OFFERORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The supplier must present a complete set of samples with the offer (...). 	<p>تعليمات للعارضين</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> يجب على المورد تقديم مجموعة كاملة من العينات مع العرض الى مكتب المنظمة في (...)

The Arabic language has specific characteristics, which make it distinct from the English language. The problems and challenges that translators face are due to the similarity in the morphological and lexical structure within the Arabic language, which leads to providing different meanings in the TL (Baker, 2011, pp.18-23). Moreover, the SL word may express a concept that is well known in the business and economic domain, but the translator may find it difficult to choose the right lexical equivalent in the TL to express it in the context. The above example shows that the translator has translated (Instructions to the offerors) as (تعليمات للعارضين) which appears as a Google translation.

The analysis of the chosen business term "offerors" in the text shows that in the SL it may express a concept which is known in the English language as "somebody who makes a bid," according to *The Ultimate Business Dictionary: Defining the World of Work* (2003, p.224). However, it is not an equivalent in the Arabic language as (العارضين), because the back-translation of the Arabic term (العارضين) is (exhibitors) according to *Hans Wehr A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Wehr, 1976, p.605), which means a business or an organization that shows their products or services at an exhibition (Parkinson & Noble, 2005). The translator could have achieved a better translation if he /she translated it as (تعليمات لمقدمي العروض). The problems and challenges that the translator faced were due to the similarity between the morphological and lexical structure in the Arabic language such as (عروض) from the original word (عرض) while (العارضين) from the original word (عارض), which led to different meanings in the Arabic context. A possible solution to these problems and challenges could be found if the translator possesses sufficient knowledge of the morphological and lexical structure in order to

choose the right equivalent for the TL. Therefore, it can be said that when compared to the TL, the source text language is different in meaning and the concept is not lexicalized.

3.1.2 Lexical Collocation

Collocations are one of the lexical issues between English and Arabic, which play a vital role and their importance appears in specialised translation, especially in business and economic translation products, which is defined by Crystal as “the habitual co-occurrence of individual lexical items” (Crystal, 2008, p.86). It indicates the relationship between lexical items and the words that frequently appear beside them in the language.

On the one hand, the translation of collocations is not a very complex process. However, it becomes complicated when the translators deal with collocations as individual words rather than phrases. The translator should bear in mind that it is not required that all English collocations have direct Arabic standard collocation equivalents because the Arabic versions are not widely recognized collocations and they can be called semi-collocations or just translations (Ghazala, 2008, p.107). However, the only challenge that the translator faces is being able to recognize the Arabic collocations of business and economic terms within the business contexts and adopt commonly used terms in the TL.

On the other hand, collocations' translation is no less problematic than other forms of lexical issues because they are specific terms and fixed expressions. In the attempt to find an equivalent collocation in Arabic when translating business and economic texts, translators might be tempted to use a word-for-word translation of the English collocation in order to find the equivalent collocation in Arabic. Moreover, as long as the words are limited, the easier it is to find proper equivalence. Newmark (1988a, p.69) pointed out that “The longer the unit, the rarer the one-to-one”. This is illustrated by the challenges and difficulties that the translator has faced in translating the texts of the three examples below.

Table 4: Different Collocation

ST1	TT1
Must submit the financial turnover of last three years and its bank statement (account).	يجب تقديم القوائم المالية للسنوات الثلاث الماضية وكشف الحساب المصرفي.

Table 5: Inaccurate Collocation

ST3	TT3
Proof of financial stability such as financial turnover of last three years and bank statement.	إثبات الاستقرار المالي مثل الدوران المالي للسنوات الثلاث الماضية و كشف الحساب المصرفي

Table 6: Equivalent Collocation

ST3	TT3
Proof of financial stability such as financial turnover of last three years or bank statement.	إثبات الاستقرار المالي مثل العائد المالي خلال لسنوات الثلاث الماضية أو كشف حساب مصرفي

In the comparative analysis of the three tables above between ST and TT, it is obvious that the collocation "financial turnover" was transliterated differently and inaccurately in table 5 and 6 of the same text in different places, where it translated as (الدوران المالي) and (العائد المالي). The same term in a different text in table 4 was translated as (القوائم المالية). The analysis of the texts shows that the collocation "financial turnover" has been translated in three different ways, where two of them are non-equivalent to the TL. It might have been better if translator had used only one of the translation options rather than several. It might have been better if he had chosen (الدوران المالي), as each English collocation contains a semantically more significant head word, which is generally the word that is used literally, such as "financial" or "turnover" and according to *Interpreter's thematic dictionary: ... accounting, commercial, economic, finance ... expressions; English-Arabic* (Abdul-Raof, 2005, p.524), can be translated into (العائد المالي) and (الدوران) in order to become (الدوران المالي) as fixed pattern collocations in Arabic, as Dickins et al. defined that "collocation is an occurrence of one word in close proximity to another" (Dickins et al, 2017, pp. ١٠٢-١٠١). Furthermore, the translator should not translate "financial turnover" into (القوائم المالية) or (العائد المالي) because, e.g., the back-translation of (العائد المالي) is "financial return", which is totally different from the economic terminology point of view as it is mentioned in the *Dictionary Al Fareed in Finance & Economics, English-Arabic* (Abdullah, 1985, p. 103). The solution is to find proper business equivalents by looking them up in monolingual and bilingual specialist dictionaries, and translators should not have different versions for equivalent Arabic collocations. However, this is not the solution to all language equivalents or lexical cases, as meaning is always dependent on context in order to not reflect the specific meanings of the

source language terms. Therefore, the possible explanation for this situation might be a lack of bilingual business collocation dictionaries.

ξ. Findings of the Study

This study's challenges and problems in translating business and economic texts have been discussed in the analytical tools and data analysis section. The major findings can be summarized as follows:

- The findings of business texts analysis have indicated that lexical collocation problems are some of the challenges that translators face and which might lead to coherence and cohesion problems and ambiguity of meanings in TTs as collocation is part of texts content and their meanings.
- The findings have shown that the lack of translators' knowledge of the Arabic language derivations causes difficulties in selecting morphological and lexical structures and leads to different meanings in TTs.
- The findings of the study have revealed that the specialized and formal nature of the business and economic language requires more attention by translators who should also have good knowledge of business and economic terminologies in order to overcome any challenges during the process of translation.
- Also, the study's findings indicate that specialised business and economic dictionaries play an important role in overcoming terminological issues and challenges that translators encounter while translating business texts.
- The findings from the analysis of business and economic translation texts revealed that the descriptive analyses and theoretical discussions of business translation in this study can be used as a guide for translators, particularly novice translators, to recognise obstacles and challenges.
- It is worth noting that the findings of the comparative descriptive analysis and translation of business and economic documents revealed that, in certain situations, translators used Google Translation, causing a loss of coherence and cohesion in the TTs.
- According to this study, business and economic terminology may have more than one correct and faithful translation. However, in the case of specialised translations of

tenders and bids in business texts, one business translation term may be appropriate for the context.

o. Conclusions

The obstacles and challenges that translators encounter are diverse. The current study has narrowed them down to some examples involving lexical and equivalence challenges. The following conclusions were drawn as a consequence of the rigorous analysis of the data collected in order to answer the research questions:

- The translated texts that have been published by some organization have treated specialized business terminologies as general words and, in many cases; they opted to use different synonyms in the TL due to the difficulty of understanding business and economic concepts and vocabulary.
- The lexical translation of business terms is a major source of problems and challenges in most business and economic translation products due to the differences in meanings in context.

According to the data analysis and the main findings of the study, the study recommends the following:

- Specific training courses in translating business and economic documents must be provided to translators in order to prepare specialized translators in this field.
- Translators should improve their background knowledge and economic terminology by reading topics in this field, especially bilingual translated texts and cultural knowledge, in order to be professional translators in business and economic specialties.
- In order to make sure that business and economic terms have been translated appropriately, the study recommends that translators use back-translation for the terms needed for reliability and faithfulness.
- Translation departments at universities are assumed to provide specialised bilingual dictionaries and practical, specialised translated booklets in business and economic fields in order to overcome the challenges and problems of specialised translation.

Since every study has limitations, this study could not cover all aspects of business translation.

The following topics can be suggested for further studies:

- The Role of Cultural Equivalence and Arabization in Business Advertising Translation with Reference to English and Arabic: Skopos Theory in Practice.

- Obstacles in Translating Business Terminologies of Business Master Abstracts from Arabic into English.

Table (1)

Details of the Parallel Business Texts Adopted in the Study

Text No	Type	Source Text Publication	Year	Source Text Title	Target Text Title
1	Tender	NGO	2020	Tender Name: Provide Livelihood Assistance Agriculture input for Vulnerable Farmers in Sinjar and Hamdanya districts Nineveh Governorate	اسم المناقصة: دعم الفلاحين مع المدخلات الزراعية في قضاء سنجار و الحمدانية في محافظة نينوى
2	Tender	NGO	2020	Call for Tender Purchase of cows	دعوة الى مناقصة شراء الابقار
3	Tender		2020	Support Farmers with Agricultural inputs and cash for work in Ninawa Governorate / Wana sub-district	دعم الفلاحين مع المدخلات الزراعية بالاضافة الى النقد مقابل العمل في محافظة نينوى / ناحية وانة
4	Tender	NGO	2019	Supply Inputs for Small Farmers in NES	تجهيز أصحاب الحقول الصغيرة بمواد زراعية في شمال شرق سوريا

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