The Translation of Compliments in Spoken Jordanian Arabic into English

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Abstract

This paper examines the difficulties involved in translating culture-bound compliments from spoken Jordanian Arabic into English in different cultural interactions. The study specifically looks into a number of compliments in Arabic and discusses their translation into English. To achieve this goal, a test was designed by the researchers to examine the translation of 10 compliments that are not familiar to the English language and culture, and these translations were examined with the help of a few native English-speaking colleagues to check their acceptability in stylistic terms. The sample of subjects included 20 female BA students at the University of Jordan; all of them are in their third year. The findings reveal that the participants adopted the techniques of literal translation, paraphrase, addition, and omission when translating culture-bound compliments. They also encountered difficulties relating to grammar, lexical choice, and collocation.

Keywords: Compliments, Arabic, English, Translation

1. Introduction

Compliments are non-idiomatic expressions, mainly used in spoken language to express supplication, praise and admiration of somebody or something. In Jordan, they are very common on the occasions of serving food, appearance, and skill/ability and to a lesser degree on occasions like marriage and birthdays. They may also be used to express admiration in a variety of stuff like shoes, bags, cars, houses, pets, or even babies and husbands. In addition, compliments may equally be used by males and females.

Compliments exist in all languages. Language acquisition and teaching involve learning complimenting and compliment responses as complimenting serves a certain communicative functions. Arabic-speaking students, especially those who are interested in translation, find it challenging to interpret Arabic compliments into stylistically acceptable English. Such translations need be clear and understood in the TT; otherwise, they may widen the gap between the two languages, i.e. Arabic and English. According to Manes and Wolfson (1981), complimenting is paid "to create or reinforce solidarity by expressing appreciation or approval". Hatch (1992), however, argues that some compliments may not be identified by second language learners as compliments; consequently, interpretation or paraphrase becomes a necessity. In the Arabic culture, for example, it is quiet common to pay a compliment like أنت ذئب (you are a wolf) to a praiseworthy man as wolves are known for their braveness and boldness. If we translate this compliment literally into 'you are a wolf', the addressee may find it offensive or unclear.

Translation plays a role in bridging gaps between languages and cultures. As far as I know, no studies have been conducted on the translation of compliments from spoken Jordanian Arabic into English. Although translation involves syntactic, semantic, stylistic, pragmatic, and cultural aspects, this article focuses on the translation of compliments from Arabic to English from a semantic and stylistic perspective, the techniques used in translation, and the problems encountered by translators. The study can be helpful to teaching staff, translators, critics, and researchers in the field of second language acquisition. It is hoped that it narrows the gap between Arabic and English. The terms: techniques, procedures, and strategies are used interchangeably in this study.

2. Objectives of the Study

This study aims at investigating the nature of translation and the most common strategies used by novice translators, specifically BA students at the University of Jordan, when translating compliments from spoken Arabic into English. The study tries to answer the following questions:

1) What are the most common strategies adopted by translators when translating compliments from Arabic into English?

2) Are there equivalents in English to compliments in spoken Arabic?
3) What type of difficulties do the translators face in translating the selected data?
4) To what extent did the translators succeed in rendering the chosen corpus into English?

3. Literature Review

Although many studies on complimenting have been conducted in different languages from cross-cultural perspectives, no attempts have been carried out in translation studies with regard to compliments' translation. The majority of these studies focus on the fields and topics of compliment (e.g., Daikuhara, 1986; Migdadi, 2003; Zayed, 2014; and Al-rousan, 2016); the acceptability of compliment (e.g., Daikuhara, 1986; Yu, 2005; Al-rousan, 2016; and Hao,2017); the structure of compliments (e.g., Holmes, 1986; and Nelson,1993); the factors behind compliments (e.g., Al-rousan,2016); and compliment response (e.g., Herbert, 1997; and Farghal and Al-Khatib, 2001).

It is necessary at the beginning to make clear what is meant by a compliment. Olshtain and Cohen (1991) define compliments as a speech act that aims "to express solidarity between speaker and hearer and to maintain social harmony" (p. 158). Holmes (1988,p.446) similarly says that a compliment is "a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.), which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer".

In Jordanian Arabic, compliments are common in the fields of appearance, performance, and food; their responses are not only highly acceptable, but also favorable comments. Migdadi (2003) finds that appearance and skill are the most frequent topics of compliments, with the former accounts for 45% and the latter 24% of the overall compliments used in the Jordanian community. However, the degree of frequency of the topics of compliments varies from one culture to another. For instance, the commonest topic of compliments in the Japanese community is ability (Daikuhara, 1986). In contrast, the commonest field of compliments in America is the appearance (Wolfson, 1983).

Al-rousan et al. (2016), however, do not consider compliments naturally accepted verbal gifts as some people tend to reject them out of modesty and the attempt to minimize self-praise. Zayed (2014) conducted a study on compliments involving 30 students from UAE. The participants paid compliments while they were communicating in English. The findings have shown that the participants fail to compliment appropriately in that they ignored some of the English commonly-used forms of compliment and used a lot of compliments that are uncommon in English. As a result, their compliments were unacceptable.

As for the cultural dimension of compliments, Hao (2017) indicates that when talking to higher status people in the traditional Chinese culture, lower-status people should not take the initiative. Yu (2005, p.110) similarly states that "lower status individuals, when interacting with people of higher social rank, may avoid paying compliments that could be seen as flattery".

In the Arabic tradition, compliments are used among people of different statuses, but they may be interchangeably avoided among people of different genders, especially those whose mutual ties are not strong. A number of the compliments in the Arabic-Islamic culture are usually preceded or followed by 'inshallah', meaning 'God willing' or 'masha'allah', meaning 'this is God's will'. In addition, a compliment from a male to a female whom he

does not know well may be deemed a street mark or harassment, especially if the compliment is about the female's appearance. Al-rousan et al. (2016) confirm that the Arabic-Islamic culture plays an important role in the phrasing of compliment and compliment responses, with reference to Jordanian Arabic context.

The syntactic structure of compliments also differs from one language to another. In a study on compliments in New Zealand English, Holmes (1986) found that the syntactic structure of the compliments can be predicted to a large extent (a noun phrase, is/are, and an adjective) (e.g., "This chicken is great."). Arabic speakers, however, never use the same structure. Arabic uses a huge number of nouns, adjectives, and verbs. In English, for example, only five adjectives (nice, good, beautiful, pretty, and great) and two verbs (love and like) tend to be account for most of the compliments (Herbert, 1991). Holmes (1986) found that compliments in New Zealand are paid to people of equal status as themselves.

Nelson et al. (1993) investigated compliments in Egyptian Arabic and American English, using a qualitative and a quantitative methodology, in which they used a questionnaire and face to face interviews. In their study, the researchers contrasted compliment preferences, means of complimenting, the length, structure, and frequency of complimenting.

The topics of compliments and their responses reflect positive values of a given society (Herbert, 1997). In the field of foreign language learning, Nelsen et al. (1996) argue that pragmatic failure is quiet possible in the context of paying compliments and responding to them. Farghal and Al-Khatib (2001) similarly point out that there is a pragmatic failure in compliments' response by native English speakers during the acquisition of Jordanian spoken Arabic compliments.

In response to their translation, compliments should be studied from a cultural perspective. Newmark (1988, p. 66) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression". In Newmark's categorization of cultural words, compliment topics such as food, clothes, and houses fall within material culture; work falls within social culture; and activities fall within organizations customs. Such a categorization indicates that complimenting in general is a cultural phenomenon. The translation of compliments from one culture to another may narrow the gap between cultures. However, not all translation strategies work in translating culture-bound compliments. Some strategies may be acceptable; others may be misleading.

There could be different strategies for translating culture-specific items (Munday, 2001). Among these strategies are literal translation and equivalence. In the translation of compliments, literal translation does not necessarily convey the message intended in the SL. Equivalence, on the other hand, has many types, and it is not an easy task to attain in the target language (TL) compliment. Vinay and Darbelnet's (1989) introduce similar strategies among which paraphrase, addition, and deletion are not included. Mona Baker (1998) also points out that there are different procedures for translating culture-bound elements. The most prominent of which are cultural substitution, using a loan word or a loan word plus explanation, paraphrase using unrelated words, and omission. Literal translation is not among these procedures.

The translation of culture-bound terms involves a number of difficulties. Dweik and Suleiman (2013) argue that the biggest challenge is achieving the equivalence of the cultural term. Failure to achieve equivalence is quiet possible, especially if the two cultures have very little in common. The second difficulty revolves around choosing the appropriate translation strategy. A translator may adopt the literal translation technique but result in awkward expressions. Translators may be affected by their own culture. Cultural differences make the task of translation a difficult one. The translator then needs to be familiar with the culture, customs, and the social settings of the source language (SL) and TL speakers as well as different styles of speaking and social norms of both languages (Akbari, 2013).

4. Methodology

The study provides a quantitative and qualitative analysis regarding the type of compliment, the procedures used in translating it, and the findings of the translation test. The population of study consisted of 20 students majoring in Applied English at the University of Jordan. The respondents were Jordanian female students in their third year, majoring in Applied Linguistics. They have very little experience in translation, and this is the first time they take an Arabic-English translation course. The translation test was given to them at the end of the second semester, 2017.

The researchers relied on this test which was developed by the researchers themselves. The test comprised a sample of the most common 10 compliments naturally occurring in spoken Jordanian Arabic, and students were asked to translate them into English. The corpus of compliments was selected from different fields and situations, namely: clothes, food/cooking, and happy occasions. The participants themselves helped in choosing the compliments, depending on the common places of them in the Jordanian society, particularly among females.

A number of colleagues who teach translation courses were asked to examine the extracts chosen to modify, comment on, or approve the validity and suitability of the test. The respondents acknowledged that they encountered difficulties in rendering the compliments into English, due to the many differences between the two languages. The accuracy and acceptability of the translations were judged by native English-speakers, visiting or working at the University of Jordan.

Each of the compliments was analyzed in terms of its occasion/context (food, clothes, or marriage), and the meaning of the source text (ST) compliment was explained. The compliment type, i.e. supplication, statement, question, or exclamation was determined. The type of translation was categorized as literal, paraphrase, addition, or omission. Equivalence and translation loss were also considered in the analysis.

The translations were judged as correct, acceptable, or unacceptable depending on the view of bilinguals and native English-speaking colleagues at the University of Jordan. The translation was considered correct if the compliment was translated by using cultural equivalence i.e. the SL cultural word is translated by a TL cultural word or dynamic equivalence i.e. the message in the TL is the same in the SL. The translation was regarded

acceptable if the meaning of the compliment is paraphrased, using stylistically correct English. The translation was regarded unacceptable if the compliment was translated literally, resulting in awkward English and unclear meaning. The discussion also focuses on dynamic equivalence, addition, deletion, and translation loss.

5. Results of the Test

In translating compliments, translators face a number of difficulties due to linguistic and cultural gaps between Arabic and English. The major challenge is to find an equivalent in the target text (TT). If there is no equivalent, the translator then tries to translate or paraphrase the compliment into English. Here arises the question of translation technique, i.e. literal translation, paraphrase, addition, and omission. The new rendition also raises the question of translation loss. The findings show that students failed to translate culture-bound compliments. Some also used literal translation; this technique yielded awkward English and unclear meanings. Students also produced meaningless expressions and collocations due to the misuse of some lexical words. The participants committed a number of grammatical mistakes, too. The techniques used in translating the corpus were literal translation, paraphrase, addition, and omission. Following is a detailed analysis of each compliment and its translations. See Table 1 below.

Table 1. The evaluation of the participants' translations (F= frequency)

No.	The compliment	Correct Answer		Acceptable Answer		Unacceptable Answer	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	يسلموا اديك الأكل بشهي.	7	35	6	30	7	35
2.	دايمة إن شاء الله.	0	0	4	20	16	80
3.	يعطيك العافية.	8	40	7	35	5	25
4.	القالب غالب.	6	30	6	30	8	40
5.	شو هالحلو؟	7	35	7	35	6	30
6.	مثل القمر.	8	40	8	40	4	20
7.	مثل عارضات الأزياء.	12	60	2	10	6	30
8.	عقبال 100 سنة.	11	55	2	10	7	35
9.	لابقين لبعض.	10	50	3	15	7	35
10.	بالرفاه والبنين.	2	10	16	80	2	10

5.1 Compliment 1: الأكل بشهي يسلموا اديك

This compliment is paid by guests to a hostess who prepared the food by herself after they have finished their food to express their gratitude to her and their joy with the tasty food. It literally means "the food is appetizing; may your hands remain safe". This compliment has two parts: the first الأكل بشهي is a statement; whereas the second يسلموا اديك is a supplication; the two parts are used interchangeably.

As shown in Table 1 below, 35% of the respondents provided correct translations such as the single adjectives "delicious" and "amazing" as they were deemed equivalent to الأكل بشهي.

Similarly, the sentences "I love your cooking" and "you are a fantastic cook" were found to be equivalent to يسلموا اديك. Other translations such as "what a lovely food!", and "thanks a lot" were also found to be correct. 30% of the respondents provided acceptable translations such as "delicious, tasty, savory, and yummy". Such translations represent a paraphrase of the ST compliment although they are not often used, as the evaluators claim. Another acceptable translation is "beautiful food", although food is not usually described as beautiful as the evaluators claim; they think that "wonderful" and "amazing" would be better adjectives. 35% of the students supplied unacceptable translations such as "dainty" and "delectable" which do not collocate with food in spoken English.

It is worth mentioning that 40 % of the participants did not translate the second part of this relatively long compliment يسلموا اديك. The remaining 60% translated it, using expressions such as "thanks for your hands", and "thanks for your effort", which were deemed not equivalent. "Your hands remain" was completely unacceptable, and "I can hardly express my gratitude" was so formal. In "thanks for your effort", the word "effort" was awkward and in "bless your hands", the word "hands" might be replaced with "heart" so that it can be acceptable. In other words, none of the translations suggested here was acceptable due to the misuse of some lexical words.

5.2 Compliment 2: دايمة ان شاء الله

This compliment is paid by guests to a host/hostess before they leave, but it does not necessarily imply that the food was cooked at home; they may have ordered it from a restaurant. It means "may such a food be always abundant, God willing".

None of the translations was deemed correct. Only 20% of them were found to be acceptable as the paraphrase strategy of translation is adopted; among these are "may Allah bless the food", "thank God for this food", and "hope this goodness is always here". 80% of the translations were literal or word for word such as "permanent buffet", "permanent dining table and "hope these meals last forever" were deemed wrong. Similarly, the three translations "be for a long time in life", "long live", and "wish you stay healthy" were also wrong as none of them reflects the meaning intended by the compliment. "May we always gather on this table" was also unacceptable as "gather at this table" is the correct expression in English. Likewise, "we hope this bless never disappears", and "may this bless be reserved" were deemed wrong as the noun form "blessing" should replace the verb form "bless". It is worth mentioning that a number of translations included the strategy of adding words, but only few versions were acceptable in the translation of this Arab or Muslim culture-specific compliment.

Obviously, the translators misunderstood the meaning of the ST compliment and consequently mistranslated it. "Bon appetite" was not acceptable as it may be said by the hostess rather than the guests. The literal translations "always"and "forever" were deemed wrong, too.

5.3 Compliment 3: يعطيك العافية

This expression can be expressed to someone who served the others. It can be said to a hostess, a builder, a policewoman, a nurse, a female teacher, a maid, etc. It means "stay healthy".

40% of the translators supplied equivalent and, consequently, correct translations such as "thank you for your effort or hard work", "good, great, or fantastic job", and "well done". 35 % of them provided acceptable translations like "you worked very hard" and "God bless you" which paraphrase the meaning of the ST compliment. "Sound and wellness" was not sufficient; other words were needed. 25 % of the translations like "may Allah give you goodness", and "may God give you the ability, strength, or power" were deemed unacceptable as they either attempt to literally translate the compliment or add synonymic words. The translation of the last compliment "may you have a strong health to do a good job" also adopts the strategy of adding extra words, but it was deemed unacceptable.

5.4 Compliment 4: غالب القالب

This compliment is neutral; it is used to express admiration of a man's or woman's appearance. It is usually a response to the question "how do I look (wearing this dress, pants, or any piece of clothes?) It is literally "the mould is a winner"; it means "your awesome body transcends the beautiful clothes".

30% of the translations were correct. Among these are "you look awesome", "it suits you", "it fits you", "it looks good on you", and "you look good no matter what you wear". Translations such as "made especially for you", "I love it; you look so charming", "the dress is designed for you", "you look really nice", "everything is beautiful on you", "the dress is cool on you", and "I absolutely love what you wear" were found to be acceptable. These compliments form 30% of the overall translations. Some of the translations were relatively long, having additional words to explain the meaning of the compliment. 40% of the translations, such as "you made it look more pretty', "you are beautiful with or without it", "beautiful whatever you wear", "you are more beautiful than your dress", "you are very cute, so everything looks cute on you", "it is not the dress that is pretty, but It is you", and "your beauty made the dress even look better", were found not to be common and involving a wrong addition, and consequently they were deemed unacceptable. Other translations, specifically "you are beautiful inside-out" and the literal "the template is predominant" and "the inside is the winner" were unacceptable, either. Similarly, "your true nature overlaps your outer façade", "your inner beauty rides over your outer pose", "substance is more valued than the look", and "pretty from inside and outside" were also too long and unacceptable.

5.5 Compliment 5: شو هالحلو؟

This example is common when someone expresses admiration of other's clothes, shoes, hat, glasses, and the like when they see it for the first time. It means what a beautiful dress, shoes, etc! Although this compliment is in the form of a question, it implicitly involves an exclamation. The speaker does not expect an answer from the addressee, but a compliment response.

35% of the students provided correct translations like the equivalents "I love your style", "you look amazing", and "fabulous". Similarly, 35 % of them offered acceptable translations such as "wonderful", "You look good"; half of the translations deemed acceptable were literal and in the form of exclamation such as "how pretty!", "how elegant!", "how gorgeous!", and "how chic!"

30% of the respondents suggested false translations such as "how cute!", "nice outfit", "it is a vintage", "nice looking", "flawless look", "fascinating". They were rejected as they do not collocate with clothing. For example, 'cute' in informal American English may mean 'sexually attractive', and may consequently be rejected by the addressee. 'Outfit' refers to a set of clothes worn together rather than a single piece. 'Vintage' as a noun has nothing to do with clothing; it refers to wine produced in a particular year or the period of gathering grapes for making wine. 'Good', instead of 'nice', collocates with 'looking. The two adjectives 'flawless' and 'fascinating' were regarded as awkward by the English-speaking reviewers.

5.6 Compliment 6: مثل القمر

This simile is used to express admiration and appraisal of someone's face, and it is common when likening a gorgeous lady or even a baby to the moon.

Translations deemed correct such as the equivalents "stunning" and "charming" form 40 % of the overall versions, and acceptable translations such as the paraphrase "you look gorgeous", "lovely", and "amazing" form 40 %, too. The evaluators used the judgments 'correct' and 'acceptable' interchangeably in evaluating the translations of this compliment. 20% of the renderings involve the literal translation 'moon' as in "you are like the moon", "you are as sweet as the moon", and "are you a moon or what?" These were totally rejected as 'moon' does not have a connotation of a beautiful face in English, and the third one in particular has a wrong addition in the TT.

5.7 Compliment 7: مثل عارضات الأزياء

This simile is in the form of a statement. It is used among females when they want to express admiration of a slim and tall lady, especially when she appears in a new dress; it literally means "like a (fashion) model".   The word 'model' is used in Arabic with the same sound and meaning in English.

60 % of the students provided correct and equivalent literal translations such as "you look like a model", and 10% of them translated it as "gorgeous', the only translation deemed acceptable as it paraphrases the ST compliment. Translations such as "a fashion lady" and "you got it all, girl", "perfect" and "so perfect" form 30% of the overall translations. The first two were rejected as they do not seem to capture the idea really of comparing someone to a model, and the remaining two look awkward.

5.8 Compliment 8: عقبال 100 سنة

This compliment is exclusively used in birthday parties. It means "I wish you long live and celebrate your one hundredth birthday". This supplication is used equally among males and females.

55% of the respondents provided the equivalent "happy birthday", and this was deemed correct. "May God prolong your life", was deemed acceptable though provided by only 10% of the students as it paraphrases the ST. The versions "may it be a hundred years", "a hundred years to come, and "wish you the same after 100 years" formed 35% of the translations. All of them were deemed unacceptable as they either adopted the literal translation strategy or added extra words that turned the TT awkward. The reviewers suggested "May you live to be a hundred" instead.

5.9 Compliment 9: لابقين لبعض

This expression is paid when we encounter newly married spouses, engaged couples, or a couples intending to get engaged. It means "you fit/match each other".

50% of the subjects provided correct translations, particularly "you are a perfect match", "you are made for each other", and "you complete each other". 15% provided translations deemed acceptable like the paraphrase "you fit each other". The remaining translations (35%): "You look so good together", "you have one soul", and "you are an amazing couple" were deemed unacceptable as they do not carry the same meaning of the compliment in Arabic.

5.10 Compliment 10: بالرفاه و البنين

This compliment is also used in the form of a supplication. It is exclusively given to a newly married couple, especially when people visit them for congratulations. It means "I wish you prosperity and children". Although the word بنين is the plural of a male child, it is implicitly understood to refer to male and female children.

The translation "may you be blessed with harmony and bestowed with children" is a detailed paraphrase of the ST. It was judged as either correct or acceptable although it was provided by only 10% of the participants. Similarly, the paraphrases "may your life be full of happiness and kids" and "wish you a happy life" were found to be acceptable, and these form 80%. The literal meaning of the ST compliment "I wish you a happy life filled with money and kids" looked long as it included extra words. It was deemed awkward and uncommon and was supplied by 10% of the translators.

6. Discussion: Dynamic equivalence, addition, deletion and translation loss

According to Nida (2003), there are two types of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence is concerned with the message itself, in form and content, and fidelity is "given to the lexical details and grammatical structure of the ST" (Al Salem, 2014, p. 223). Dynamic equivalence, in contrast, rests on the assumption that "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (Nida, 2003, p. 159). In this type of equivalence, fidelity is given to transporting the message (Al Salem, 2014, p. 223).

Formal equivalence was hard to attain as shown in the translation of the selected sample, especially because the compliments in spoken Arabic have colloquial words and phrases whose structure is totally different from that in English. Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, was achieved in the majority of the TT versions. Examples are "delicious" and

"amazing" in Compliment 1, "good job" in Compliment 3, "you look awesome" in Compliment 4, "you look like a model" in Compliment 7, and "happy birthday" in Compliment 8.

Translation by addition is "adding something to the TT which is not present in the ST" (Nida, 2003, p. 24). An evident example of this time manifests itself in Compliment 3, where a number of participants feel that in the ST, Allah/God is the doer of the action. They consequently render it in the TT as shown in "God bless you", "may Allah give you goodness", and "may God give you the ability, strength, or power".

Although Compliment 4 has only two words, some of the translations presented like "you look good no matter what you wear", "I absolutely love what you wear", "you made it look more pretty', "you are beautiful with or without it", "beautiful whatever you wear", "you are more beautiful than your dress", "you are very cute, so everything looks cute on you", "it is not the dress that is pretty, but you", and "your beauty made the dress even look better" are relatively long. Only the first two of these were found to be acceptable and the remaining ones unacceptable.

The translations supplied for Compliment 10 were also longer than the ST compliment. Examples are "may your life be full of happiness and kids" and "I wish you a happy life filled with money and kids". Such translations were deemed unacceptable.

The translator may choose not to translate culture-specific or unclear extracts, but this deletion leads to translation loss. Dickins et al. (2002) indicate that the most obvious form of translation loss occurs when something in the ST is simply omitted in the TT. Omission occurs in the Arabic-English translation of linking words (different patterns of cohesion), phrases at the start of some paragraphs in newspapers, and when the information conveyed is not important (Dickins et al., 2002, p. 23).

In translating the corpus of compliments in this study, the participants did not come across cohesion or paragraphing. Some information, however, was viewed by some of them as not important, and was consequently ignored in the TT. This is clear in the translation of Compliment 1, where 40% of the subjects ignored the second part يسلموا اديك in translation, mainly focusing on paying a compliment on the food served.

In Compliment 2, إن شاء الله (God willing) was almost ignored in the TT as shown in "permanent buffet", "permanent dining table and "hope these meals last forever" although these translations were already unacceptable. Omitting these parts in the translation of compliments 1 and 2 led to a translation loss on the semantic level as such supplications are part of everyday compliments.

7. Conclusion

The data obtained from the translation test shows that the most common strategies adopted by students when translating compliments from Arabic into English are literal translation, paraphrase, addition, and omission. The literal translation technique proved to be wrong to a large extent. It was acceptable in translating only compliments 7 and 9 as these two exist in

both languages i.e. Arabic and English. Paraphrase was successfully used in rendering around 30% of the compliments but did not work with the remaining percentage. Addition yielded awkward and uncommon expressions in most of the examples chosen. The omission technique was rarely used in translating the corpus of compliments (2 examples), but it led to translation loss and was consequently a failure.

The corpus of the data found that most compliments in Arabic take the form of a supplication, declarative sentence, interrogative sentence, or an exclamatory sentence. Arabic and English were found to have no one to one correspondence in terms of the syntactic structure of both languages. The translation of compliments was therefore not an easy task for novice translators. Nevertheless, dynamic equivalence was achieved in many translations.

The difficulties the translators faced in translating the selected data are due to cultural, lexical, and grammatical differences between Arabic and English. In the translation of culture-bound compliments, the paraphrase technique in particular proved to be the best. Lexical and grammatical mistakes reflect weaknesses in Arabic-English translation ability of the respondents.

The translators succeeded to a certain extent in rendering the chosen corpus into English. Around 60% of the translations provided were either correct or acceptable. The translators completely failed in rendering one of the compliments into English.

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