

Strategies of Translating the Concomitant Accusative by Saudi EFL Learners

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: March 05, 2019

Accepted: March 22, 2020

Published: March 31, 2020

Volume: 3

Issue: 3

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.3.2

KEYWORDS

Concomitant; Classical Arabic;
Accusative; grammatical
differences; translation

ABSTRACT

Arabic is a Semitic language and is spoken throughout the Middle East, North Africa and some African countries. Classical Arabic is the language of the Qur'an; a Modern Standard Arabic is used in schools, universities and the mass media. On the other hand, English is a member of the Indo-European languages family. It is originated from Proto-Indo European, a language thought to be spoken about 3000 B. C. Due to the above-mentioned reason there are a lot of grammatical differences which arise between the two languages. Languages across the world have strikingly different syntactic rules when it comes to number, gender, person, tense, aspect, voice and word order. Some of these grammatical devices or systems may be present in one language but absent in another language. With students inclined to literally translate between such languages as in the case of KSA, the change of form can be quite difficult to understand. Teachers of language and translation in KSA are concerned with learning problems that arise due to lexical and grammatical non-equivalence between Arabic and English which often leads to confusion and incorrect output during translation process. The current study aimed at investigating one of the Arabic grammatical structures which has no equivalent in English (Concomitant Accusative). Following analytical methods, the study targeted two objectives: One, testing the learners' ability to translate the Concomitant Accusative; and two, to gather an understanding of the strategies they adopted in the process. The study is likely to be of great value in a foreign language learning environment as is the case in the KSA. Participants were female undergraduate students (N=35) at Hurimilla College of Science and Humanities, Shaqra University, KSA. The data collected was analysed using SPSSR. The findings showed that this structure is indeed confusing for students as (53.7%) of the students' translations were literal, while 26.3% were correct or acceptable, and (7.4%) were incorrect. On the other hand, (9.7%) of the students did not give any translations, while the weak translations represented (5.7%).

Introduction

The significance of translation in our daily life is extremely multidimensional. Translation does not only pave the way forward for global interaction, but it also allows nations to forge interactive relationships when it comes to making advancements in technology, politics, etc.

Equivalence or its absence is a known hurdle in translation. The problem arises when suitable counterparts in a target language do not exist for expressions in the source language. Non-equivalence, predictably, is one of the obstacles that face both translators and students of English. Arabic has many structures that do not exist in English such as concomitant Accusative *المفعول معه*. Therefore, when students face such structures, they feel confused. Translating to and from English-Arabic therefore poses a peculiar, though not unique, challenge for them. English and Arabic belong to different language families and are even written in different directions.

Evolution in English can be said to be more of a constant feature with the language getting enriched by the varied cultural contact that it got exposed to. Arabic is an old language and one that prides itself in its purity and closeness to the original. In terms of discourse, Arabic is a highly inflectional language with amazing scope for improvisation as these inflections convey meaning even with a changed word order. This is not so in English. As the differences were not enough to challenge the students' faculty, there are degrees of prevalence of certain features in both the languages, that is, they share certain characteristics. For instance, the feature of agglutination or of adding morphemes or inflections to words to form long words strings exists widely in Arabic but only peripherally in English. However, the fact that it is present in both is adequate to confound the learners of both or either. In terms of translation, this is called non-equivalence. Another feature of non-equivalence, and one which is also the focus of this study, is the accusative case. Syntactically, the object in Arabic appears in the accusative case but its semantic function may vary from emphasis to indication of any of the many aspects of an event. This embedded feature is seen by Arabic speaking learners of English as a major hurdle in translation. This problem has been previously studied but the current research aims to add the dimension of learner strategies employed to counter it. Thirty-five female students of the Department of English at College of Science and Humanities in Shaqra University at Huriymilla were requested to undertake translation of a short selection of Arabic sentences with cognate accusative into English. This was followed up with personal interviews with fifteen of them selected randomly to gain an understanding of the strategies they followed to translate the problematic case marking.

Statement of the Problem

As teachers of translation courses, we understand the particularly challenging task that is translation. Whether identified as a science or an art, the pitfalls associated with it still remain. Translation teachers (at least in the KSA) are conscious of sensitising their students to the fact that meaning is embedded in context, that language can sometimes be restrictive, and that precise language equivalents sometimes do not exist. English and Arabic being two very different languages in many ways, translating between these is particularly difficult for our students. With much training, some proficient students are indeed able to translate 'what' a text says but not 'how' it is said. This paper tries to find why the Arabic speaker fails to capture the essence of a text while translating between Arabic and English.

Research Question

The current research paper attempts to answer the following question:

1- Which strategies do the students use when translating Concomitant Accusative into English?

Research Objectives

The study had the following objectives to achieve:

- (a) Enlighten those engaged in learning and doing translation about the possible linguistic challenges that they may have to encounter.
- (b) Create greater awareness among the linguists, translators and translation teachers towards undertaking descriptive bilingual comparative studies in the study of translation between Arabic and English.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Contrastive linguistics is considered one of the new fields within translation studies. It involves the analysis of two or more languages, with the aim of understanding their similarities and differences. The objectives of the comparison may vary: The term 'contrastive linguistic' or 'contrastive analysis', specially concerns itself with the applied aspects of contrastive studies as a means of predicting and/or explaining difficulties of second language learners with a particular mother tongue in learning a target language. Contrastive studies in translation do not only concentrate on texts but also investigate even the smaller units in languages, such as, grammatical and lexis.

Williams and Chesterman (2002, 90) highlight this fact when they state, "A contrastive approach might also focus not on texts but on grammatical structures or lexical items, looking for equivalence rules for translating certain structures between a given pair of languages, or for terminology equivalents". Farghal,(2009,5-24) says that linguistic problems arise from the differences of structure in the vocabulary and syntax of the SL and the TL. He adds that, these problems can also be caused by lack of grammar knowledge in the SL or the TL.

Accusative Case

Accusative Case (حالة النصب) in Arabic refers to nouns used as object in sentences, and their modifying adjectives. Nouns that are accusative are called (المنصوب) in Arabic. The number, gender and definiteness of the noun or adjective in question are marked using inflections in Arabic. This makes Arabic a highly inflectional language. There are five types of objects or complements, المفعول لاجله, المفعول المطلق المفعول معه, المفعول به, Al-Dahdah, (2001, 237)

المفعول معه Concomitant Accusative

Definition

Concomitant Accusative is an adjunct in the verbal clause. It accompanies the verb or the action, and does not participate in it. For example, the sentence *سرت والشاطئ* does not mean that the beach also walks, but it means that "I walked along the beach". So, it is a company of the action of walking Al-Afghani, (1970, 111). Concomitant Accusative may have different meanings in different contexts. It can refer to a place, a time, a person, a thing, or an animal.

Concomitant Accusative comes after *واو المعية* which is for companionship. It is preceded by a verbal clause containing a main verb (Mubarak, (1992, 217). For example, *جلست والنهر* "I sat beside the river" is a verb, *والنهر* and *واو المعية* is Concomitant Accusative. It can be also preceded by a noun which has the meaning of the verb or the action. For example, in the sentence *سيرك والرصيف* "I like your walk on the sidewalk", *سيرك* (your walk) is a noun which has the meaning of walking.

Concomitant Accusative has some conditions which are:

- It should be optional, additional, and comes after a complete sentence Al-Dahdah, (2001, 305).
- الواو* should be for companionship and not for addition and not as a conjunction.
- It must be after *الواو* and not *مع* (with) Mubarak, (1992,234).
- It should be after a verb, or a word which implies the meaning of the verb.

استيقظ النائم وأذان الفجر

مشيت وشاطئ النيل.

سار القطار وخط السكة الحديد.

ذهبت إلى المدرسة وطلوع الشمس

حضر الضيف وغروب الشمس

يَنبَادِلُ الْأَبُ الْحَدِيثَ وَأَبْنَاءَهُ

رُؤْيُكَ وَالسَّائِلَ.

يسرُّني حضورُكَ والأسرة.

ما أنتَ والبَحْرُ؟

كَيْفَ أَنْتَ واليَرْدُ؟

عادَ المُسافرُ واليَلِ.

- جاءَ زيدٌ وأخوه.

مشى اللصُّ وجدار البيت.

رحبت بالزائر وصديقه.

Grammatical Rules

Concomitant Accusative should not precede the verbal clause. It is not appropriate to say: (سرت والشاطيء). (Al Afghani, 1970, 187).

1- It should not be between the verb and the subject. It is not appropriate to say: Al- Dahdah, مشى الرجل والحديقة. (2001).

2- (waw for companionship) should not be omitted.

3- No word should be between الواو (waw) and Concomitant Accusative

4- The accusation may be by (ما or كيف) which refer to a question, for example ما أنت والطب and كيف أنت وزيد "how is your relation to Zaid".

There are three cases of الواو (WAW) which are:

a. If الواو cannot be a conjunction in the sentence, the accusation will be obligatory and the noun after الواو became (Concomitant Accusative). For example, in the sentence سرت والشاطيء . In this sentence الواو is for companionship and not a conjunction because الشاطيء does not participate in the action of walking, but it accompanies it Mubarak, (1992, 220).

b. If the conditions of Concomitant Accusative are not provided, the nomination will be obligatory and الواو became a conjunction. So the noun after الواو is not Concomitant Accusative. For example, in the sentence كل رجل وابنائُه يذهبون (each man and his children go). الواو is a conjunction because children participates in the action.

c. Both accusation and nomination are acceptable if the conditions of Concomitant Accusative and العطف are provided and الواو can be a conjunction or for companionship. For example, in the sentence جاء خالد وزيد can be Concomitant Accusative because it means that Zaid came when Khaled came (not together). And الواو can be a conjunction (Ali and Khaled came together).

Previous Studies

This part deals with relevant studies which shed light on this area of study. Mohammad (2019) investigating one of the Arabic grammatical structures which has no equivalent in English (Circumstantial Case). The findings showed that this structure is indeed confusing for students with 37% of them using literal translation, and 12.29% producing incorrect versions or sometimes avoiding translating them. Personal interviews revealed that the reason of these results can be directly attributed to the absence of these categories in English, and non-equivalence between Arabic and English.

In her MA research entitled, "Difficulty in Translating the Arabic Grammatical Category 'The Accompaniment Complement' (المفعول معه) into English". The Case of First Year Master Students of English, University of Constantine, Bounaâs Housna (2019) attempted to test the students' abilities in translating the accompaniment complement (المفعول معه) from Arabic into English. The objectives of this study were to find out whether students find difficulties in translating it and to identify these potential difficulties and their reasons. The hypotheses of this research emphasize that if students truly understand the accompaniment complement, they will be able to translate it and also the absence of the accompaniment complement equivalent in English will lead students to translate it literally. In order to test these hypotheses, a questionnaire and a test have been submitted to 1st year Master Students.

This population has been chosen because these students have had enough lectures in translation during their previous years of study. In addition, they are selected in order to know whether postgraduate students still have difficulties. Thirty (30) students from this population are selected randomly as a sample. The findings revealed that students had serious problems that make them unable to translate the accompaniment complement into English appropriately. The absence of the accompaniment complements in English and the difficulty in understanding its meaning lead to inappropriate translations.

Most of the findings of this study agree with the present study as follow:

- a. The majority of students see that the most difficult version is from Arabic into English because Arabic is complicated and consists of several things which do not exist in English.
- b. The majority of students do not know the Arabic category the accompaniment complement and did not study it.
- c. Students do not know how to translate the accompaniment complement because they did not study how to translate it.
- d. All students have difficulties in translating the accompaniment complement which are: understanding its meaning, finding its equivalent in English, choosing the appropriate preposition, and writing in an acceptable structure in English.
- e. The main reasons of difficulties are: the absence of the accompaniment complement' equivalent in English, students did not study it, and they did not study how to translate it.
- f. Students followed many strategies in their translations such as: using literal translation, using a preposition, using an adverb, guessing the meaning and translating according to this meaning.

Another study was conducted by Magdi El tyab El Bashir Mohammed, (2015). He investigated the factors that affect equivalence, identify the existing equivalence problems in translation, and provide the main techniques for translation and reduce the problems in curriculum showing and comparing differences between the two languages (contrastive analysis studies). The researcher used the descriptive analytical method. The population was all learners of translation especially post graduate males and females who are in Omdurman Islamic and Omdurman Ahlia Universities, and those who worked in the field of translation. The data collection tools were a questionnaire and a test distributed to 100 participants randomly, males and females. The questionnaire consisted of five parts offered to post graduate, master degree and PhD students.

It is worth mentioning that the findings of this study which is applied to different levels of students agree with the present study as follow:

- a. There is no exact equivalence between two languages in the field of translation.
- b. There are real problems and difficulties encounter translators.
- c. EFL learners encountered by different linguistics factors in languages.
- d. There are no two languages have the same grammatical structure or word order.
- e. There are many types of equivalence can be used to reduce the problems of translation.

Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive analytical method in conducting the study. This method is used for the sake of giving valid and factual results and findings.

Data Collection Method

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher collected data from the subjects by administering one test to level six students. The total number of students was (35). The target students were asked to translate (5) Arabic sentences into English. The purpose of this test was to explore the students' translations for this structure. (Appendix 1).

The study population consisted of all undergraduate female students in Shaqra University, Colleges of Science and Humanities, English Department, Level Six in the academic year (2015 – 2016). corresponding (1436) (1437) H A .

Students' Sampling

The actual number of the students enrolled in the course (translation 2) was (41). Six withdrew for different excuses. So, the study sample consisted of (35) undergraduate female students from the English language program at Hurimilla College of Science and Humanities, Shaqra University, KSA. One of the suggested fields of work for these students is translation. So, they are prepared, although with a few courses of translation, but intensive. Because it is a small province, the number of the females in different departments, particularly English is few.

Characteristic of Students' Sampling

All the students were females ranged between 18-23 years old. The number of students at this level is few as usually a great number of the students withdrew, or transferred to other department when they reach advanced stages in the departments. EFL learners at that college receive three courses of translation. The first one is assigned in the first year (Level One) of the program, second term. It trains the students in English – Arabic translation. This course includes some theories in translation such as the principles of translation, types of translation etc, but it does not include any information about equivalence. Similarly, the second course which follows the first one also trains the students in translation from English into Arabic, neglects this notion. The last course is assigned to students in the third year (level six), second term when students' competence in English is fortified. According to the department curriculum, they receive just a single Arabic- English course. These students (academic year 1436-1437 H.D)/ Second Term) were the target of this study.

Procedures

Face Validity

To establish face validity, the test was judged by four Arabic language assistant professors at Shaqra University. Their constructive comments and remarks were taken into consideration and the necessary modifications were made accordingly.

Procedures

The students at level six (Third Year/ Second Term) were asked to translate (5) Arabic sentences into English at the beginning of the Arabic- English translation course. Out of context sentences were chosen for two purposes. Firstly, the test was conducted at the beginning of the term. The students usually start this course (Translation 2) by translating different types of sentences as an introduction before shifting to paragraphs or texts. Secondly, according to the researcher's experience, the students are so slow while translating. They will need a lot of time if the researcher gives them long sentences or paragraphs. Further, they will feel bored, as a result they will not try to give any productions, or do it indifferently. The test was graded out of 10 marks with two marks allocated for each sentence.

Table (1) Criteria followed in Marking the Students' Test

Mark	Explanation
2	The translation provided is correct or acceptable (It means that the student translated the target structure correctly, or produced a good trial).
1	The translation provided is literal (the student used the same part of speech of the studied category).
1 1/2	The translation provided is incorrect (the student avoided translating the target or used

	a different grammatical category
1/2	The translation provided is weak (the student's translation is semantically and syntactically poor).
zero	No translation is given at all.

Generally, the marking of the test focused on the students' translations of the target word category; and did not take into consideration simple grammatical or spelling mistakes.

Reliability of the Students' Test

After the researcher distributed the test to (35) students, it was collected and reliability and validity were calculated and measured (Alpha Cronbach rule). At the undergraduate and master's dissertation level, it is more likely to be used than the split-half method. In order to determine whether the entire test is consistent, Cronbach Alpha was conducted to ensure the reliability of the test. The higher the Alpha is, the more reliable the test is. Usually 0.70 and above is acceptable.

Table (2) Reliability Analysis and Internal Consistency Cronbach's Alpha

Concomitant accusative		
سرت والنهر أمتع نظري بالمشاهد الجميلة.	.313	.800
يَسْتَيْقِظُ العاملُ وأذانَ الفجرِ.	.648	.686
يبدأ شهرُ رمضانَ ورؤية الهلالِ.	.653	.694
سهرت وقراءة القرآنِ.	.687	.668
كيف أنت والبرد؟	.466	.754
Cronbach's Alpha	0.768	

Findings and Results

Analysis and Discussion of the Test

Table (3) Students' Marks of Translation in Concomitant Accusative

Sentences regarding concomitant accusative	Freq.	Percent (%)	Mark Mean ± SD	
سرت والنهر أمتع نظري بالمشاهد الجميلة.				
The translation provided is correct or acceptable (2)	11	31.4	1.26 ± 0.60	5.94 ± 2.37
The translation provided is incorrect (1.5)	2	5.7		
The translation provided is literal (1)	19	54.3		
the translation provided is weak (.5)	-	-		
No translation is given at all (0)	3	8.6		
يَسْتَيْقِظُ العاملُ وأذانَ الفجرِ.				
The translation provided is correct or acceptable(2)	8	22.9	1.20 ± 0.56	
The translation provided is incorrect (1.5)	4	11.4		
The translation provided is literal (1)	20	57.1		

The translation provided is weak (.5)	-	-	
No translation is given at all (0)	3	8.6	
يبدأ شهر رمضان ورؤية الهلال.			
The translation provided is correct or acceptable(2)	13	37.14	1.31 ± 0.65
The translation provided is incorrect (1.5)	4	11.43	
The translation provided is literal (1)	14	40.00	
The translation provided is weak (.5)	-	-	
No translation is given at all (0)	4	11.43	
سهرت وقراءة القرآن			
The translation provided is correct or acceptable(2)	8	22.86	1.09 ± 0.65
The translation provided is incorrect (1.5)	3	8.57	
The translation provided is literal (1)	16	45.71	
The translation provided is weak (.5)	3	8.57	
No translation is given at all (0)	5	14.29	
كيف أنت والبرد؟			
The translation provided is correct or acceptable(2)	6	17.143	1.09 ± 0.49
The translation provided is incorrect (1.5)	25	71.429	
The translation provided is literal (1)	0	0.000	
The translation provided is weak (.5)	2	5.714	
No translation is given at all (0)	2	5.714	

The results in table (3) show that the mean score of the students regarding this set was slightly above average ($mean = 5.94$, $SD=2.37$) which is not good but to some extent acceptable. To have an idea about the students' performance in this category, the above table shows that (53.7%) of the students' translations were literal, while 26.3% were correct or acceptable, and (7.4%) were incorrect. On the other hand, (9.7%) of the students did not try to give any translations at all, while (5.7%) of the respondents provided weak versions.

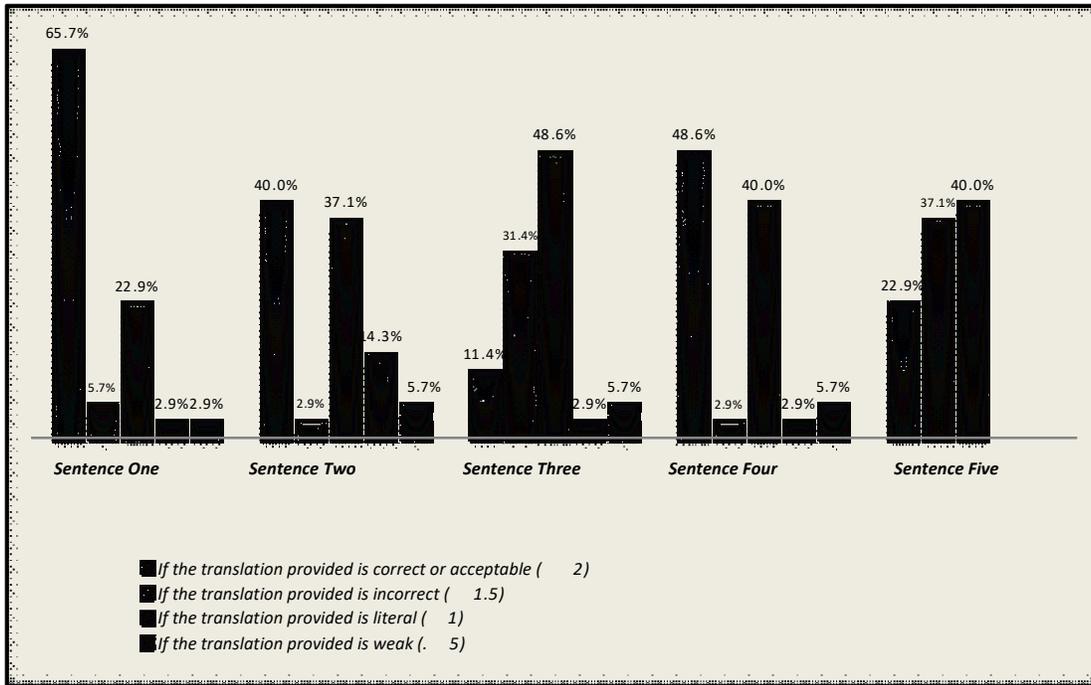


Figure (1) Students' Marks of Translation in Concomitant Accusative Test.

Table (4) Mark Interpretation of Concomitant Accusative

Mark interpretation	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
the translation provided is correct or acceptable(2)	46/175*100 =26.3%				
the translation provided is incorrect (1.5)	13/175*100 =7.4%				
the translation provided is literal (1)	94/175*100 =53.7%				
the translation provided is weak (.5)	5/175*100 =2.9%				
no translation is given at all (0)	17/175*100 =9.7%				

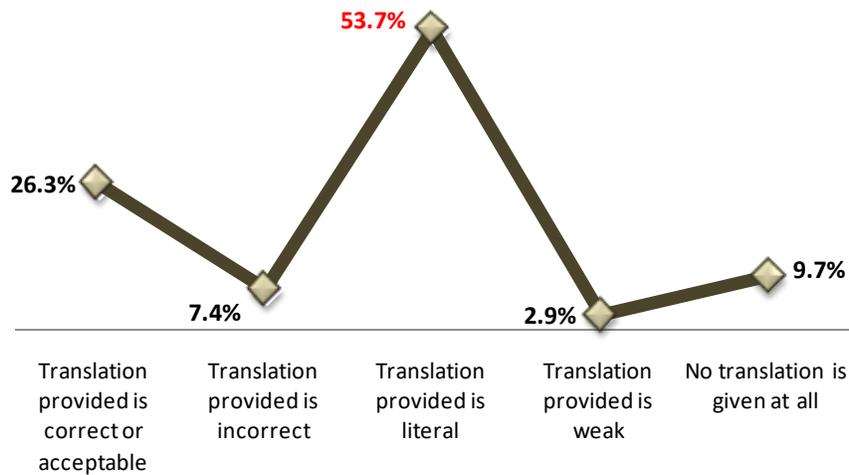


Figure (2) Students' Marks of Translation in Concomitant Accusative Test

Summary of the Students' Performance in Concomitant Accusative

This structure received the worst performance in the test as it rarely used nowadays, and the meaning of *واو المعية* is mixed with the conjunction "and". Concomitant Accusative is usually translated by a preposition and a noun, and sometimes with a clause. (53.7 %) of the total number of students translated it literally, while (7.45%) did it incorrectly. Only (26%) of the students produced correct translations.

On the other hand, some smart students did not use the traditional prepositional phrase which requires high knowledge of prepositions. They dropped the "waw" and used instead a clause which fulfills the meaning of this category such as *الهِلال ورؤية الهلال* as "Ramadan begins/ starts when we see the crescent/ the crescent appears". *سهرت وقراءة القرآن* as: "I stayed late reading the Quran, or I didn't sleep till late to read the Quran".

Conclusion

The present study aimed at exploring the translation of Concomitant Accusative by testing the abilities of EFL learners in translating it. The sampling involved female undergraduate EFL students (level six, English Department) at Hurimilla College of Science and Humanities, Shaqra University KSA. Data apparently established that the Arabic structure understudy is indeed difficult to be translated to English. The study therefore, concludes that EFL learners face difficulty in translating Concomitant Accusative, therefore, they tend to use different strategies such as literal translation and ended up producing incorrect outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on Arabic structures that are absent in English and the concept of non- equivalence problems between Arabic and English. Concomitant Accusative is not the only such feature. These characteristics of difference need to be drilled more diligently as part of class tasks as nothing can replace familiarity with the problem areas and strategies that may be used to counter them.

Limitations of the Study

This paper was in the nature of a pilot study to understand the pitfalls encountered by professionals and amateurs of translation. The sample size of thirty-five respondents was small and being uni-gendered, the findings may not be freely generalizable. Individual differences are likely to have affected the results. Finally, for dearth of time and resources, the researcher was forced to administer only short and simple language structures for the test. With the recognition that language is about discourse, it is important that greater resources be invested in future studies on these lines and longer texts be analysed to obtain a deeper understanding on the issue.

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APPENDIX:

TRANSLATION TEST

Dear Students,

The researcher is going to shed light on the notion of non- equivalence, and its impact. So, she intended to discuss an Arabic linguistic structure, namely, The Concomitant Accusative, which does not exist in English. Please translate the following sentences to English:

1. سرت والنهر أمتع نظري بالمشاهد الجميلة.

2. يَسْتَيْقِظُ العاملُ وأذانَ الفجرِ.

3. يبدأ شهرُ رمضانَ ورؤية الهلالِ.

4. سهرت وقراءة القرآنِ.

5. كيف أنت والبرد؟
