Forms of Address in Arabic:
A Sociolinguistic and Translational Perspective
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Abstract

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The present study aims at investigating forms of Address in Arabic across geographical boundaries as extracted from six Arabic literary works from six different Arab countries. This study investigates Forms of Address from two perspectives: translational and sociolinguistic. It has been found that forms of address play an important role in determining the type of relationship between the addressee and the addressee. Consequently, unawareness of their correct rendering into the TL [English] will, certainly, create comprehension problems, and will result in misunderstanding of the actual intended meaning. The above idea finds support in the fact that Arabic and English belong to two different cultures and, forms of address, as we can see in this study, are culture-specific. Thus, this study argues that a translator has to be bicultural [knowledge of the SL and TL cultures] in addition to being bilingual.

The influence of forms of address on language is best expressed in the words of Clifford Greetz (1960, as cited in R. Burling 1970) where he states that, depending on the way forms of address are used, language is
given "a kind of stately pomp which can make the simplest conversation look like a great ceremony".

The most important idea in this study is related to the fact that every form of address has a certain place to occupy. When this place is changed, and, consequently, a deviation from the norm takes place, a message is there in the mind of the speaker.