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INVESTIGATING LEXICAL GAPS IN TRANSLATION OF ISLAMIC TERMS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

ABSTRACT

Translation is an intercultural activity therefore a translator is an intercultural expert or mediator. Intercultural interaction is an important aspect of translation, a process that goes beyond transferring meanings of words from one language into another. This paper deals with the role translation plays in enhancing intercultural interaction focusing on six translations of religious terms in the Holy Qur'an. This paper investigates how Arabic- to -English/Bosnian translators encounter and overcome lexical gaps. It is based on the hypothesis that lexical gaps in religious translation seem to be rather problematic to get around. Translation data for analysis is taken from six published renditions of the Glorious Qur'an where ayahs involving lexical gaps have been discussed along with alternative translations for the inadequately translated ayahs. The assessment of the translations of Qur'anic ayahs under study has yielded that lexical gaps are too thorny in religious translation to overcome unless appropriate translation techniques are utilized to process them with the help of Islamic English. This study aims to investigate the role of Islamic English in solving the difficulties in translating the noble Quran.

Key words: intercultural interaction, mediator, lexical gaps, Islamic English, religious translation

TRANSLATION - INTERCULTURAL ACTIVITY

Translation is essentially a human activity which enables human beings to exchange ideas and thoughts regardless of their different tongues and cultures. Today the movement of people around the globe can be seen to mirror the very process of translation itself, for translation is not just the transfer of texts from one language into another, it is now rightly seen as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures, a process during which all kinds of transactions take place mediated by the figure of the translator.

Nowadays the researchers who put the emphasis on the cultural aspects of translation are numerous. Mayoral et al. (1988: 357) conceive the translation process as a communicative act, and they define the figure of the translator as a decoder of the source language as well as an encoder of the target language, and at the same time a receptor of the message in the source culture as well as a source of the message in the target culture (cited in Martinez-Sierra, 2010: 119).

For descriptivist Toury (1995: 56), translation is an activity "which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions, i.e., at least two sets of norm-systems on each level." Cateora and Graham (1999: 94) also argue that language may be one of the most difficult cultural elements to master, and indicate that sometimes it can be advisable to resort to a cultural translator ("a person who translates not only among languages but also among different ways of thinking and among different cultures"). The cultural translator could help avoid obscene, offensive, or simply ridiculous results. In a word, they also support the figure of the translator (or interpreter) as a cultural expert or mediator. The whole discussion reflects the role of translation in opening channels of communication among human beings regardless of the distances separating them.

RELIGIOUS TRANSLATION – IMPROVING INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION

Crystal (2003: 388) states that the formal process of religious translation is a long term, painstaking and frustrating task, usually carried out by committee. Translators have to satisfy two criteria, which are always incompatible, because one looks backwards and the other forwards. Crystal emphasizes that first, the translation must be historically accurate, faithfully representing the meaning of the source, insofar as this can be known, and integrated within the religious tradition which it is a part. Secondly, it must be acceptable to the intended users of the translation - which, in practice, means that it must be intelligible, aesthetically pleasing, and capable of relating to current trends in religious thought, social pressures, and language change. No translation can ever satisfy the demands of all these factors.

The significance of translating religious expressions lies in the role they play in improving intercultural interaction. Considering the great strides taken by man in the field of communication technology, it has become evident

that a globalized world needs translators not only with specialized knowledge in two languages, but also with intercultural competence.

Cultural differences impose difficulties in translation

Knowledge of the target culture is crucial for successful English-Arabic translation. Poor comprehension may arise from lack of insight into the target culture. There is a mismatch in cultural norms and beliefs between the Arab and Western cultures.

Culture is the complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities or habits acquired by man as a member of society (Taylor, 1958: 1). It is the set of general meanings that people use to explain their origins, and to predict their future. Culture plays an essential role in determining the appropriateness of linguistic units. In addition, cultural variables affect the degree of understanding between two language communities (cf. Kussmaul, 1995: 65). As a result, language is an integral part of culture because the vocabulary of a language derives its meaning from its culture. Arabic is associated with specific cultural and social norms quite different from those, associated with other languages. Through translation, translators become transmitters of different civilizations. Inevitably to some extent, any translation will reflect the translator's own mental and cultural outlook, despite the best of impartial intentions. Every translator has her/his own beliefs, knowledge and attitudes. Discrepancy in cultural beliefs, norms and linguistic expression between the two cultures and languages is responsible for difficulties in English/ Arabic translation. Cultural differences often impose greater difficulty for translators than linguistic features such as language structure.

There are often cultural gaps caused by different aspects of societies, which lead to linguistic gaps. Therefore, finding translation equivalent for cultural terms requires the bridging of the cultural and linguistic gaps and meeting readers' expectations. "Translators have to be aware of the fact that readers' expectations, their norms and values, are influenced by culture and that their comprehensions of utterances is to a large extent determined by these expectations, norms and values" (Kussmaul 1995, 70).

LEXICAL GAPS IN TRANSLATING

Lexical gaps are instances of lack of lexicalization detected in a language while comparing two languages or in a target language during translation. Although the problem seems to be minor and clear, one gets rather the opposite impression after an excursion through the linguistic literature on lexical gaps (Cvilikaite, 2006: 127).

Cvilikaite (2006: 127) adds that a lexical gap means the absence of lexicalization of a certain concept. A concept is lexicalized when a language has a lexical item - a single word, a complex word, an idiom or a collocation - to

express it. The existence of a lexical gap will be noted only when a concept lacks lexicalization and is expressed by a free word combination or any other trans-formation (e.g., omission, translation by a different part of speech, etc.).

Lexical gaps are the resultants of the un-lexicalized concepts in a given culture. Language and culture are so intimately related in the sense that the latter is part of the former, which is why some regard language as the mirror of culture. Since the Arabic language has got a long cultural heritage behind it and the Qur'an enriched its lexical framework, many Qur'anic lexis have no one-to-one equivalents in English. In fact, culture causes "many more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" (Nida, 2000:130). So, some Islamic terms in Qur'anic ayahs will be discussed and their translations will be assessed to prove how semantico-lexical gaps are present and treated.

ISLAMIC ENGLISH IN SOLVING THE DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSLATING

The importance of the Quran to a vast portion of the world's population makes the translation effort all the more important. When translating the Quran from Arabic to English, something gets lost in translation because the translation will make the meaning weaker. One of the most evident problems in the translation of the Quran is the difficulty to translate words meanings deeply without changing. The Quran is one of the most influential books in the world today and the foundation text and inspiration for more than a billion people. It sets out the rituals, ethics, prayers and laws of Islam and is the word of supreme authority for the Muslim faith. But for many English language readers, reading the Quran in English can be difficult because some Arabic words do not translate easily into English or may have multiple meanings (Alzubi, 2013: 95).

Because the meaning is the corner stone of translation and many translation theorists agree that the ultimate goal of the translator is to convey the meaning of the second language (SL) message to target language (TL) message without distortion, the translators of the holy Quran create English Islamic; they expressed the Islamic nouns in its meanings without distortion, so several vocabularies have been appeared in English, for example the word of "hajj" instead of the word in Arabic. The idea came from a theory of transliteration (Alzubi, 2013: 95).

The transliteration approach depends on phonetic transliteration and is appropriate for unknown words. This is particularly common for proper nouns such as company, people, place and product names. When words cannot be found in translation resources such as a bilingual dictionary, transliteration (the process of converting characters in one alphabet into another alphabet) is used. Automatic transliteration of English OOV words has been studied for several languages, including Arabic, Korean, Chinese, and Japanese (Alzubi, 2013: 96).

PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING ISLAMIC TERMS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

Many Arabic words are simply not translatable into English. Many others are rendered into English with difficulty. The desire of Muslims to present their meanings in English is often so strong as to make them less cautious, and to use words which do not at all do justice to the intended meanings (Dazdarevic, 2012).

It must be remembered that many of the meanings of Arabic words and phrases are of divine provenance and may not be separated from their Arabic forms. And when Islamic meanings are altered, transformed and transvalued through translation, it is an irreparable loss to Islam, to the Muslim and to the human spirit.

Dazdarevic (2012) exemplifies the word *salah*, which is often translated as *prayer*. Prayer is any communication with whatever is taken to be one's god, even if that is an idol. To say that one prays to God, to Jesus, that one prays for a juicy apple in the morning or for one's beloved to recover from a sickness, to pray at any place or time, in any position or under any condition, all these constitute sound English usage. What a distortion of the word *salah* to translate it to 'prayer'. Being the supreme act of worship in Islam, *salah* must be held at its live times, for the purposes defined by the shari'ah. It should consist of precise recitations, genuflections, prostrations, standings and sittings with orientation towards the Ka'bah, and should be entered into only after ablutions and a solemn declaration of intention 01 *niyah*. How can all this ever be compressed in a word like prayer. Doesn't reason dictate that *salah* (prayer) should always be called *salah*? Prayer corresponds to the meaning of devotion and may well stand as translation of it, but certainly not for *salah*. Table 1 presents some Islamic terms taken from six translations of meaning of the Holy Qur'an.

Table 1. Islamic terms in six translations of meanings of Qur'an

Muhsin 'Khan	Yusuf Ali'	M. H. Shakir'	M. M. Pickthal'	Saheeh International'	Besim Korkut'
Adhan	Call to prayer	Call to prayer	Call to prayer	Call to prayer	Ezan
Akbar	Magnify	Glory	Magnify	Magnify	Ekber
Salat	Prayer	Worship	Prayer	Prayer	Namaz, salat
Asr	Middle prayer	Asr	Middle prayer	Middle prayer	Asr, akšam

Ayat	Ayat	Verse	Verse	Verse	Ajet
Sadaqat/ Sadaqah	Charity	Alms	Almsgiving	Charitable expendi- tures	Sadaka
Ghaib	Unseen	Ghaib	Unseen	Unseen	Gaib
Zakat	Charity	Poor-rate	Poor-due	Zakah	Zekat
Halal	Lawful	Allowed	Lawful	Lawful	Halal
Jinn	Jinn	Jinn	Jinn	Jihn	Džin
Ka/'bah	Ka/'ba	Kaaba	Ka/'bah	Ka/'bah	Kjaba
Qiblah (direction)	Qibla	Qiblah	Qiblah	Qiblah	Kibla
Hajj	Hajj	Pilgrimage	Pilgrimage	Hajj	Hadž

These are ayahs that show usages of Islamic terms in all six translations of meanings in the Holy Qur'an.

Table 2. Islamic terms in the Holy Qur'an

Translators of the Holy Qur'an	سورة التوبة At-Tawba, Surah (Chapter) 9, Ayat (Verse) 18
Mohsin Khan	The Mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day , perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat and fear none but Allah. It is they who are on true guidance.
Abdullah Yusuf Ali	The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day , establish regular prayers , and practise regular charity , and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance.

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Muhammad Habib Shakir	Only he shall visit the mosques of Allah who believes in Allah and the latter day , and keeps up prayer and pays the poor-rate and fears none but Allah; so (as for) these, it may be that they are of the followers of the right course.
Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthal	He only shall tend Allah's sanctuaries who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due and feareth none save Allah. For such (only) is it possible that they can be of the rightly guided.
Saheeh International	The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakah and do not fear except Allah, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided.
Besim Korkut	Allahove džamije održavaju oni koji u Allaha i u onaj svijet vjeruju i koji molitvu obavljaju i zekat daju i koji se nikoga osim Allaha ne boje; oni su, nadati se je, na Pravome putu.

**PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING PERSONAL NAMES
OF THE PROPHETS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN**

By analysing all the translations we can see that most of the translators did not use transliteration and transcription for translation of personal proper names in their languages. This means that translators, translating The Holy Qur'an from the Arabic language into English, did not use transcription of Arabic but they used transcription of Biblical names (see Table 1). For example, Marmaduke Pickhtal, Saheeh International and Yusuf Ali translate Abraham instead of Ibrahim, Jesus instead of Isa, Noah instead of Nuh. We can see that Muhammad Mohsin Khan translates prophets' names using the transliteration and transcription of Arabic giving biblical names in brackets what we think is the best way. And Besim Korkut translates using Arabic transliteration and transcription. Maybe one of the reasons that the translators who did not use Arabic transcription but instead used Biblical terms, did so in order to translate for both non-Muslim and Muslim readers. Table 3 presents these names in all six translations of meaning of the Holy Qur'an showing how these translators use these names in ayahs.

Table 3. Prophet's names in translations of ayats (verses) of the Holy Qur'an

Translators of the Holy Qur'an	سورة النساء, An-Nisaa, Chapter 4, Verse 163
Mohsin Khan	Verily, We have sent the revelation to you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) as We sent the revelation to Nuh (Noah) and the Prophets after him; We (also) sent the revelation to Ibrahim (Abraham) , Isma'il (Ishmael) , Ishaq (Isaac) , Ya'qub (Jacob) , and Al-Asbat [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya'qub (Jacob)], Īsa (Jesus) , Ayyub (Job) , Yunus (Jonah) , Harun (Aaron) , and Sulaiman (Solomon) ; and to Dawud (David) We gave the Zabur (Psalms).
Abdullah Yusuf Ali	We have sent thee inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: we sent inspiration to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon , and to David We gave the Psalms.
Muhammad Habib Shakir	Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nuh , and the prophets after him, and We revealed to Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq and Yaqoub and the tribes, and Isa and Ayub and Yunus and Haroun and Sulaiman and We gave to Dawood
Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthal	Lo! We inspire thee as We inspired Noah and the prophets after him, as We inspired Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon , and as We imparted unto David the Psalms;
Saheeh International	Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him. And we revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob , the Descendants, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron , and Solomon , and to David We gave the book [of Psalms].
Besim Korkut	Mi objavljujemo tebi kao što smo objavljivali Nuhu i vjerovjesnicima poslije njega, a objavljivali smo i Ibrahimu , i Ismailu , i Ishaku , i Jakubu i unucima, i Isau , i Ejjubu , i Junusu , i Harunu , i Sulejmanu , a Davudu smo dali Zebur -

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The typical transcription of Arabic has as its purpose to convey the pronunciation of Arabic words, usually to foreigners who are not comfortable with traditional Arabic orthography.

The present situation of the English language – when it expresses matters pertaining to Islam, its culture, history and civilization, to the Muslim World or the Muslims, whether used by Muslims or non-Muslims is chaotic. It constitutes an intellectual and spiritual disaster of the highest magnitude. And it carries a universal injustice against the human spirit.

Every Muslim who needs to have his name transliterated into the Latin alphabet must have seen his name spelled in a large variety of ways. Most of these ways mutilate the Muslim's name beyond recognition. A Muslim name is in all likelihood an Arabic name. In Table 4 there are twelve prophet's names in all six translations to show this usage of different spellings.

Table 4. Prophet's names in the translations of the Holy Qur'an

Muhsin Khan	Yusuf Ali	M. H. Shakir	M. M. Pickthal	Saheeh International	Besim Korkut
Muhammad	Muhammad	Muhammad	Muhammad	Muhammad	Muhammed
Nuh (Noah)	Noah	Nuh	Noah	Noah	Nuh
Ibrahim (Abraham)	Abraham	Ibrahim	Abraham	Abraham	Ibrahim
Isma'il (Ishmael)	Isma'il	Ismail	Ishmael	Ishmael	Ismail
Ishaq (Isaac)	Isaac	Ishaq	Isaac	Isaac	Ishak
Ya'qub (Jacob)	Jacob	Yaqoub	Jacob	Jacob	Jakub
'Īsa (Jesus)	Jesus	Isa	Jesus	Jesus	Isa
Ayyub (Job)	Job	Ayub	Job	Job	Ejjub
Yunus (Jonah)	Jonah	Yunus	Jonah	Jonah	Junus
Harun (Aaron)	Aaron	Haroun	Jonah	Aaron	Harun

Sulaiman (Solomon)	Solomon	Sulaiman	Solomon	Solomon	Sulejman
Dawud (David)	David	Dawood	David	David	Davud

CONCLUSION

Translation enlightens human minds as it provides insights into other people's lives and ways of thinking. It also demonstrates the close relationship between language and culture. Translation paves the way for a world of new horizons, tolerance, and openness. Good translators should be culturally competent in their native languages as well as the target languages they translate into. Culture is heavily indebted for its intellectual development to translation. Nothing demonstrates the complexity of language and of specific texts more vividly and explicitly than translation. Translation is important as a source of diffusion of knowledge of every kind. By understanding the development of every aspect of culture in other civilizations, people can also enrich their understanding of their own culture.

Cultural differences between languages constitute the main reason behind the rise of lexical gaps. Loan-translation and transliteration are the only resort for translators to get around the problem of lexical gaps. Lexical gaps, as referred to, are attributed to a variety of reasons such as the absence of the lexicalization of some concepts in a given language. The lexicalization of the same concepts in another language constitutes translation problems and difficulties.

(FOOTNOTES)

1 Muhammad Muhsin Khan, born 1345 AH / 1927 CE, translator of The Noble Quran, Sahih Al-Bukhari, Al-lu'lu' wal Margan and many other books, continued his education until he gained a Degree in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Punjab, Lahore. He stayed in the Ministry of Health for about 15 years, then he moved to AlMadinah, where he worked as a Chief of the Department of Chest Diseases in the King's Hospital. Then lastly, he worked as the Director of the Islamic University Clinic, Al-Madinah.

2 Abdullah Yusuf Ali, CBE, FRSL (born 1872 - 1953) was a British-Indian Islamic scholar who translated the Quran into English. Ali was born in Bombay, British India to a wealthy merchant family. As a child, Ali received a religious education and, eventually, could recite the entire Quran from memory. He spoke both Arabic and English fluently. He studied English literature and studied at several European universities, including the

University of Leeds. He concentrated his efforts on the Qur'an and studied the Qur'anic commentaries beginning with those written in the early days of Islamic history.

3 Muhammad Habib Shakir (1866 in Cairo - 1939 in Cairo) was an Egyptian judge, born in Cairo and a graduate from Al Azhar University. He was a Sudan's Supreme Judge for four years (1890-1893), Dean of Alexandria's Scholars, Al-Azhar Secretary General («Wakil») and a member of its board of directors, Member of Al-Azhar Corps of High scholars, Member of Al Azhar legislative Society («al-Jam'iyya al-Tashri'iyya»).

4 Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall [1875 - 1936] was born as William Pickthall in 1875 in London, to an Anglican clergyman, and spent his formative years in rural Suffolk. He was contemporary of Winston Churchill at Harrow, the famous private school. During intervals from living a sedentary life in Suffolk, Pickthall traveled extensively in the Arab world and Turkey. In 1917, Pickthall reverted to Islam and soon became a leader among the emerging group of British Muslims. The mission of 'translating' the Qur'an had preoccupied Pickthall's mind since he reverted to Islam. He saw that there was an obligation for all Muslims to know the Qur'an intimately.

5 In 1989 three American women converted to Islam joined together to form Saheeh International. Initially established to edit Islamic literature in English submitted by authors to Dar Abul-Qasim of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, shortly thereafter the group began to produce material of its own as well.

6 Besim ef. Korkut (1904-1975), a Bosnian and Bosnian writer, Theologian and Islamic scholar.