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*Corresponding author:

**Dr.Ali Badeen Mohammed
Muhsin Abdulsada
Mohammad, MA**

University:
Mustansiriyah University

College: College of Arts

Email:

[alibadeen@uomustansiriyah.edu](mailto:alibadeen@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq)

[.iq](mailto:alibadeen@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq)

[mamdh76@uomustansiriyah.edu](mailto:mamdh76@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq)

[u.iq](mailto:mamdh76@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq)

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Translating Collocations in the Qur'an from Arabic into English: A Particular Reference to Surah Al-Fatiha

A B S T R U C T

Translation is a cultural communicative process, a cultural exchange between two different languages. In such a text conversion, the translator is the heart of the process since, as the moderator of two languages, the choices s/he makes are often (un)consciously influenced by various variables, such as his/her cultural identity or the state of his/her national identity. This paper contributes to the current body of knowledge in this area, focusing on Qur'anic collocations and approaching the collocational phenomenon in Qur'anic rhetoric from linguistic and cultural perspectives. Specifically, this study examined multiple translated versions of the collocations embedded within Surah Al-Fatiha. To operate the analysis, we employed the functional model of assessment (Zhang, 2018) in which four categories of cultural factors are presented: religion, customs, regions, and background. Broadly, the study concludes that: 1) the translators more often than not faced complications with respect to lexicality, and 2) the translators should have been significantly more cognizant of the nature of cultural and pragmatic collocations and appreciate better the gaps that exist between Arabic and English cultural concepts and beliefs.

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ترجمة المتلازمات اللفظية في القرآن من اللغة العربية الى اللغة الانكليزية إحالة خاصة الى سورة الفاتحة

د. علي بدين محمد الركابي/ الجامعة المستنصرية / كلية الآداب / قسم اللغة الانكليزية

م.م. محسن عبد السادة محمد/ الجامعة المستنصرية / كلية الآداب / قسم اللغة الانكليزية

الخلاصة:

الترجمة هي عملية تواصل ثقافي او تبادل ثقافي بين لغتين مختلفتين. يكون المترجم في مثل هذا التحويل او التغيير النصي قلب العملية لأن صفته كوسيط بين لغتين غالباً ما تؤثر في الخيارات التي يتخذها اردايا او لا اردايا او بوعي تام او بدون وعي للمتغيرات المختلفة مثل هويته الثقافية أو هويته الوطنية. لذا تساهم هذه الورقة البحثية الى مجموعة المعارف الحالية في هذا المجال ، مع التركيز على المتلازمات اللفظية في القرآن الكريم من اللغة العربية الى اللغة الانكليزية اذ ستجري مقارنة هذه الظاهرة في الخطاب القرآني من منظور لغوي وثقافي. لقد فحصت هذه الدراسة على وجه التحديد عدة ترجمات عالمية وكلاسيكية بحثاً عن ترجمات المتلازمات اللفظية المضمنة في سورة الفاتحة المباركة. تم استخدام النموذج الوظيفي للتقييم الترجمي الخاص

وقائع المؤتمر العلمي السابع تحت شعار (العلوم الانسانية بين التحديات الراهنة والافاق المستقبلية) الذي اقامته كلية الآداب في جامعة واسط بتاريخ 2023/7/1

بالعالم زانك (2018) لإجراء التحليل حيث تم تقديم أربع فئات من العوامل الثقافية: الدين ، والعادات ، والمناطق ، والخلفية العلمية. خلصت الدراسة بشكل عام إلى ما يلي: (1) واجه المترجمون في كثير من الأحيان تعقيدات فيما يتعلق بالمعجمية والالفاظ اللغوية و(2) كان على المترجمين أن يكونوا أكثر دراية بطبيعة الترابطات الثقافية والبراغماتية وأن يقدّروا بشكل أفضل الفجوات الموجودة بين اللغة العربية واللغة الانكليزية والمفاهيم والمعتقدات الثقافية المختلفة بينهما. الكلمات المفتاحية: المتلازمات، القرآن، سورة الفاتحة، الترجمة، الثقافة

Background

Translating religious collocations is often problematic because they are often highly variable in interpretation and use, even among native speakers of Arabic. Nesselhauf (2003) posed a similar standing, stating that collocations can pose diverse complexities for translators of religious texts. Collocations are, among other things, sensitive to dimensions such as register and style. Holi Ali and Al-Rushaidi (2016) observe that although suggestions on the translation of collocations have been made in recent years, it remains largely unclear to us how, and particularly which of, the available translation strategies should translators use to tackle the substantial number of religious collocations found in the Qur'an.

It is also mentioned that cross-cultural translations might reveal numerous problematic issues. In fact religious translations in general and specifically the translation of Qur'an from Arabic as a source language into English as a target language, often bring into play the elements of both Arabic and Western cultures (Aziz and Muftah 2000).

Unfortunately, studies that have analyzed Arabic-English translations of Qur'anic collocations are not only rare but are also mostly found wanting in terms of depth and coverage. Ayyad and Mahadi (2019) considered them unsatisfactory, in tandem with Barashi (2005), who questioned the generalizability of such available studies' findings.

In the present study, we focus on the translation of Qur'anic collocations at the levels of language and culture and offer a more in-depth view of the resistance and yielding of these items when subjected to conversion or reconstruction within the framework of translation. The corpus comprises eight different translations of the collocations found in *Surah Al-Fatiha* (*The*

Opening), which is considered as “the first chapter of the Qur’an, and is also known as “*Umm Al-Kitab (The Mother of the Book)*”. *Surah Al-Fatiha* has seven verses and is a Meccan chapter. Meccan chapters are defined as chapters believed to have been revealed before the migration of the Islamic prophet Muhammad (all prayers and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his followers from Mecca to Medina. It is regarded by Muslims as very meaningful and as the basis of the Qur’an and monotheism.

Due to its significance, many Muslims recite it in their mandatory and recommended prayers, as well as read it for patients and upon the deceased before laying them down in their graves. Meanwhile, the key themes of *Surah Al-Fatiha* are “monotheism, the praise of God, worship, asking for God’s help, and asking for God’s guidance”. As well as other themes which are covered by this *Surah* such as “divine attributes”, the features of a virtuous servant of God, the subject of guidance, and the “right path” regarding prayers and some terms of repulsion to the two concepts of misguidance and going astray from God.

In general, collocations refer to some forms of syntagmatic relation of words (Nesselhauf, 2003). That is the words’ associations or a set of words or phrases arranged in a certain order. It is the habitual juxtaposition of a word with another word or words, with a frequency greater than chance. For instance, the rope of Allah or the rope which Allah stretches out.

Such associations and their translations represent a phenomenon that requires careful study to not only identify the translators’ linguistic choices but also to identify the factors that motivated them to opt for certain linguistic choices over others. This phenomenon is also particularly intriguing because a word can have multiple collocates, making it more daunting for translators to recognize and produce all possible collocations for a given word (Ayyad & Mahadi, 2019).

The Present Study

We posit that translational imprecisions resulting from linguistic and cultural incongruities may unreservedly occur and that a translator’s cultural identity or the specific status of his or her national identity can affect the choice of translation strategies when working with religious texts.

This is because translation is fundamentally a cross-cultural communication activity, and when cultures are different, translators may produce renderings that are culturally foreign or even extremely opposite to the culture of the target readers.

The present study centralizes the works of culturally diverse translators: Christian translators (Rodwell and Arberry), Jewish translators (Dawood), and Muslim translators: (Pickthall, Bewley, Maududi, Al-Hilali and Khan and Yusuf Ali). For example, Yusuf Ali is a British-Indian lawyer, and A.J. Arberry is a British orientalist. As a matter of fact, we see that the impacts of the cultural factors in addition to the linguistic ones caused problems and limits in the process of translating the collocations in the selected texts of the Holy Qur'an. There are three factors for this issue. Firstly, the similarities between Arabic and English languages are not suitably to effectively assist the "expression of religious or culturally-themed elements". The issues of lack or the absence of linguistic equivalence for certain Islamic terms, the denotative and connotative senses of these terms, and the richness of Arabic language in terms of vocabulary and grammar, are the second factor. While the third one is the propable variables for inappropriate translation and problems of the process of translation such as cultural issues, which include religious background, exposure, and understanding

Aims

The present study is an effort to assess eight translations of the idiomatic collocations embedded within the Qur'anic text *Surah Al-Fatiha (The Opening)*. In addition, we investigated the reasons behind the disparities found, and suggested possible renditions for inadequate entries. For data analysis, we utilized the functional assessment model by Zhang (2018). The analytical framework is provided in the later part of this paper.

Related Literature

Difficulties in translating religious or cultural collocations constitute a problematic area for both Arabic and English translators. This is because when translating a culture-bound collocations

from Arabic into English, translators often encounter complexities regarding stylistics, meaning, and cultural transfer. Shojaei (2012) notes that the lack of idiomatic-level equivalence is the main challenges that translators face in the process of translating religious or idiomatic collocations. The Arabic and English languages have great varieties of idioms, but it is not easy to find an equivalent in the target language (TL) that corresponds well with the idiom in the source language (SL) – both in meaning and in form.

Before we proceed further, it is apt to lay out an understanding of what can be defined as a collocation, referring to what is available in extant literature. To go through a number of classifications for collocations suggested by Arab as well as Western researchers, one may start with Emery (1988), who tried to create combinations of collocations to make clear distinctions between them. He spoke about the major types, such as open and restricted collocations. Firstly, open collocations (free word combinations) are characterized by a free combination of elements (verb, adjective, noun). Secondly, restricted collocations are basically combinations of two words forming a non-idiomatic meaning. These collocations mostly follow certain grammatical and structural patterns in addition to their restricted usage. Ghazala (2003) used the term collocation to refer to any fixed expression, including proverbs and idioms. Examples of collocations are *he who forewarns has excused himself* (أعذر من أنذر) and *more faithful than a dog* (أوفى من الكلب).

Baker (1992) believed that the foremost difficulties that often arise when tackling religious collocations are the ability to recognize and interpret a collocation correctly and the translator's success in looking for the most fitting equivalent in the TL. However, the ways through which Arabic and English use idioms to express religious notions vary, and this constitutes a real difficulty for most translators. She classified collocations into marked collocations and unmarked collocations. Marked collocations mostly possess special meanings that are very significant in making a text as more expressive; Baker proposed that if the translator faces a marked collocations in the SL, he should translate it into marked collocations in the TL. However, literal translations of idiomatic collocations should be avoided, or mistranslation is likely to occur.

Focusing on the significant role of collocations in language proficiency, Husamaddin (1985) divided them in terms of dimensions, such as their lexical and semantic strength as well as their use. Still, the functions of collocations may vary from one text to another depending on their rhetorical and idiomatic purposes. Husamaddin sorted them according to their meaning, giving examples of his classifications:

- Sounds made by different animals or objects: زئير الاسد (*the roaring of a lion*)
- Verbs related to the act of cutting objects: قص الشعر (*to cut hair*)
- Names of places where animals or insects are found: اصطبل خيل (*a horse stable*)
- Groups of objects: باقة ورد (*a bouquet of flowers*)
- Parts of objects: كسرة من الخبز (*a piece/slice of bread*)
- Verbs related to the uncovering of various parts of the body: كشف عن ساقه (*to uncover one's leg*)
- Movements of different parts of the body: خفقان القلب (*the beating of the heart*)

In the same vein, Lewis (2000) and Hafiz (2002) made distinctions between the different types of collocational patterns in the Arabic language depending on their grammatical functions. They essentially grouped collocations into lexical and grammatical collocations. The difference is that the lexical ones contain “a content word and a grammatical word (usually a preposition, an infinitive, or a clause),” whereas the grammatical ones contain only lexical items..

Examples of grammatical collocations:

Verb + Preposition	<i>look at, walk up</i>
Noun + Preposition	<i>anger at, care of</i>
Adjective + Preposition	<i>proud of, ashamed of</i>
Preposition + Noun	<i>by accident, in advance</i>
Adjective + Infinitive	<i>important to...</i>

Examples of lexical collocations:

Verb + Noun	<i>set the table</i>
Adjective + Noun	<i>fresh breath</i>
Adverb + Adjective	<i>bitterly hurt</i>

According to Obeidat and Mahadi (2020), in religious text, the process of translating collocations from Arabic into English becomes more complicated the translation of collocations from Arabic into English becomes more complicated when it deals with religious text, stating that “encountered problems are due to the sensitivity of certain lexical items which are deeply rooted in Arabic culture, religious connotations of specific lexical items and the idiomatic meaning of some word combinations” (p. 79). It is noteworthy that some of the available scholarly output on collocations in Arabic has not fully taken into account the inherent nature of religious collocations. However, they provide us with some interesting insights within the context of classification.

For instance, Elewa (2004) saw lexical collocations as a criterion for differentiating between synonyms in Arabic, while Cowie (1981) studied both open and restricted collocations, stating that the former is normally used in literal common sense. For example, *the war/battle + began/ended*. Emery (1988) argued that this type of combination is not a collocation since one component must be either literal or figurative. This combination is found in all text types in Arabic and English. Nouns can also collocate with less common adjectives, such as حرب ضروس (*vicious war*).

The Qur'an is considered a vital source of collocations, idioms, proverbs and metaphors. The present research has undertaken the study of Qur'anic text by revisiting the concept of Qur'anic collocations based on translational and cultural perspectives – more specifically, via the works of culturally diverse translators. As can be perused in our findings, different problematic areas were identified, resulting from cultural disparities.

Previous Studies

Obeidat and Mahadi (2020) studied the English translations of Qur'anic idiomatic collocations, focusing on seven expressions extracted from 20 randomly selected ST samples. Utilizing the

works of three translators – Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, and Yusof Ali –they analyzed the selected expressions based on Baker’s (1992) model. The findings demonstrate that not every translator was aware of the intended meanings of the expressions and that translators should augment their renditions with functional strategies. Literal translation was also generally found to be ineffective, in tandem with a conclusion made by Hassan and Menacere (2019), who observed literal translation to be a method frequently used for translating phraseology but often led to inaccurate and stilted English. Their study involved collocations and examined phraseology as a lexical feature from a Qur’anic perspective.

Obeidat, Ayyad, and Mahadi (2020) offered another contribution to the field with a fairly detailed analysis of the features and classifications of Qur’anic collocations. The authors pointed out that Qur’anic collocations possess distinctive semantic features worthy of extensive research and that they can be grouped into three categories with different syntactic patterns: “acts of worship collocations, divine collocations, and rhetorical collocations”.

Dweik and Abu Shakra (2011) investigated the problems of translating collocations in religious texts, namely the Qur’an, the Hadith, and the Bible. From a sample of 35 students enrolled in a postgraduate translation program, the researchers found that the participants committed errors of lexical and semantic types when rendering religious collocations. The erroneous renditions were mostly due to unfamiliarity with certain collocations in the SL as well as the TL. They also considered the cultural differences between Arabic and English to be a hindrance in translation efforts. Among other recommendations, Dweik and Abu Shakra foremost advised translators to acquaint themselves with unfamiliar terms not only in the SL but also in the TL.

Another endeavour is a study by Qassem (2021), who focused on style and meaning in the English translations of five Qur’anic verb-noun collocations. Seven translations were utilized, and analysis adhered to three levels, i.e., contextual, linguistic, and translational. The findings reveal that linguistic and exegetical analyses are prerequisites for adequate rendition to prevent deviation from or loss of meaning. In addition, Qassem reported that Qur’anic collocations

employ unique literary techniques and devices, which hinder their natural and adequate renditions into English; some translators were observed to sacrifice the informative function of the collocations. Communicative translation, a method that attempts to render exact contextual meaning, is encouraged as a possible solution to cases of conflict between style and meaning.

In his thesis, Abdalati (2019) undertook the study of Arabic-English translation, concentrating on the role of free translation in rendering Qur'anic collocational phrases. The study explored three translations of the religious text and applied two approaches – Newmark's (1988) semantic and communicative translation theory as well as the exegetic translation model introduced by James Dickins (2002). Comparative analyses of 20 culture-specific and metaphorical collocations revealed the most appropriate method to be the free translation for its ability to approximate intended meanings. Meanwhile, literal translation was shown to “deform” (p. 202) intended meanings and can result in potentially confusing renditions.

Research on language and translation has been pursued from different angles, centralizing specific linguistic components and using diverse corpora. Idiomatic expressions are highly complex due to “the fact that they are mostly culture-dependent, which makes them particularly interesting to study from the lens of translation” (Mustonen, 2010). More recently, Klaudy and Heltai (2020) stated that idiomatic collocations are included under “the study of cultural back-translation”, which is “worthy of serious attention, and further lines of inquiry are suggested”.

In terms of novelty, there is no available research, to the best of our knowledge, representing the constructs of the present study which scrutinized the English renditions of *Surah Al-Fatiha*'s idiomatic collocations extracted from the works of translators with very different backgrounds. Aside from the breadth of the corpus, depth is also accounted for with the application of the four-category analytical model by Zhang (2018), which covers both cultural linguistic and extralinguistic dimensions.

Method

Approach and Corpus

This study is qualitative-descriptive, and purposive sampling was employed in corpus selection. This form of non-probability sampling is recommended for these reasons (Lavrakas, 2008): 1) to attain better alignment between sample and research objectives, and 2) to improve research rigor and trustworthiness of data and results. Deep and insightful interactions with data are also necessary for qualitative data interpretation (Maher, 2018).

The corpus comprises the idiomatic collocations found in *Surah Al-Fatiha* in the Qur'an, and the English counterparts of these Arabic expressions were extracted from more than five translated works involving three groups of translators of different nationalities:

- i. Christian translators: (Rodwell and Arberry)
- ii. Jewish translators: (Dawood)
- iii. Muslim translators: (Pickthall, Bewley, Maududi, Al-Hilali and Khan and Yusuf Ali)

All translated works are well-known and accessible to a broad audience globally and represent translations of the Qur'an across cultural divides. The main discourses of *Surah Al-Fatiha* are monotheism, the praise of God, worship, asking for God's help, and asking for God's guidance. The chapter also covers divine attributes, the indications of a righteous servant of God, the issue of guidance, and the "right path" in terms of supplications and expressions of repulsion to misguidance and going astray.

Surah Al-Fatiha consists of three sections:

1) Introduction:

Verse I is about the name of God

2) First discourse:

Verses II-IV concern the reasons why God deserves to be worshipped

First reason (verse II): God's inclusive lordship

Second reason (verse III): God's infinite mercy

Third reason (verse IV): God's sovereignty of the Day of Judgment

3) Second discourse:

Verses V-VII illustrate human obligations with respect to God

First duty (verse V): Worship of and servitude to God

Second duty (verse V): Asking for God's help

Third duty (verses VI-VII): Asking for God's guidance

Analytical Framework

For the analysis, we employed the functional assessment model by Zhang (2018), which covers four key categories: religion, background, linguistic and personal. Zhang explained that any translated work must be assessed by comparing the source text (ST) and the target text (TT, that is the translation), and cautioned that the purpose of comparison must be done for an objective evaluation.

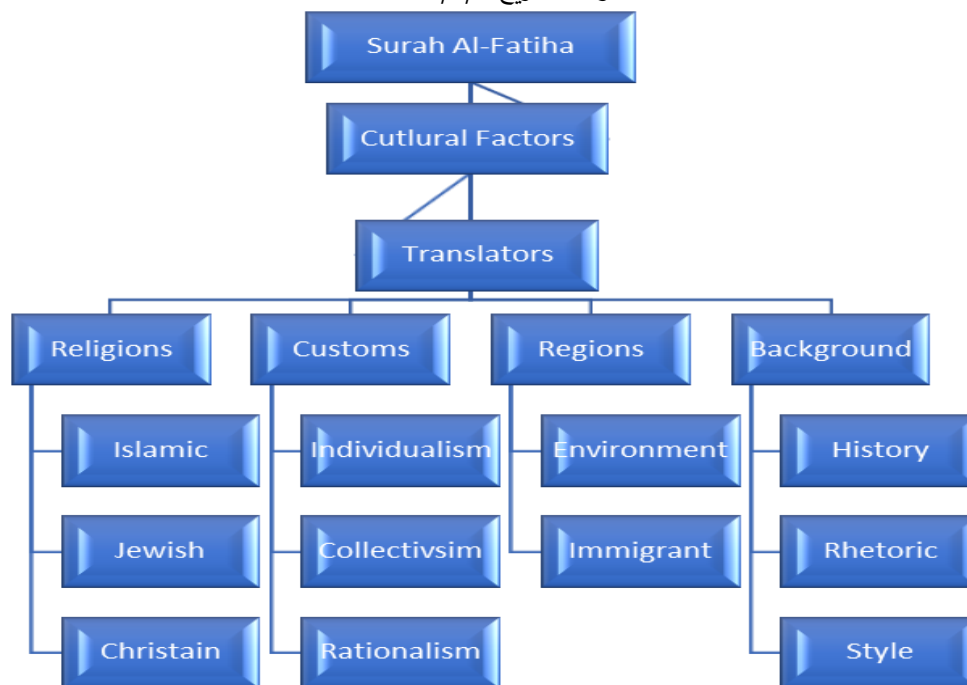


Figure 1 Analytical Framework of Cultural Factors

As illustrated via Figure 1, in comparing Qur'anic discourses and the selected translated works, all four categories had to be addressed to draw out threads of information to help us reach objective conclusions. First, we tackled the religion category in which assessment is done according to text types, i.e., the analysis had to be done on the ST first in order to determine the idiomatic collocations that must be kept invariant in the four translated texts. Second, the custom and region categories (the extralinguistic dimension). Here, we considered the extralinguistic variables that may determine the author's/translator's choice among the various means offered by one's language. We outlined a number of parameters for this category, such as the immediate situation, reference to real-world objects, time factor, space factor, audience factor, sender factor, and effective implications.

Third, we addressed the region category in terms of the equivalence of semantic choices, adequacy of lexical choices, the correctness of grammatical structures, and analogy of stylistic choices. Finally, we focused on the personal or background category. For this, Zhang (2018) suggested a subjective dimension to include the individual conditions of interpretation on the

part of the translator and translation critic. Zhang (2018) affirmed that a translation can be deemed adequate or equivalent when it preserves the same meaning and collocational effect as the ST version.

Findings and Discussion

Surah Al-Fatihah or Surat al-Fātiḥah (Arabic: سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ) is the first chapter of the Qur'an. Its seven verses are a prerequisite for every daily prayer and the guidance and lordship of Allah. This chapter has a critical role in most Islamic prayers. Furthermore, this surah offers issues like “referring to the resurrection”, and “the fact relating to the unity of the divine essence, unity of attributes, unity of divine acts, and unity of worship”. Moreover, it is the summary of the “whole meaning of the Qur'an”. Still, the translation's title differs from one translation to another; however, it appears from the translation of the name of the surah that the translators are divided into three groups: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim.

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ

A. Christian translators:

i. Rodwell: Sura I

ii. Arberry: The Opening

B. Jewish translators:

i. Dawood: Exordium

C. Muslim translators:

i. Pickthall: Al-Fatiha (The Opening)

ii. Bewley: Al-Fatiha

iii. Maududi: Al-Fatiha

iv. Al-Hilali and Khan: Sura I: Al-Fatiha (The Opening)

v. Yusuf Ali: Al-Fatiha, Or the Opening Chapter

It is noteworthy that the Muslim translators have kept or rendered the name of the surah as it is in the original, given the status of the surah in daily prayer, which is not valid without it. The recitation of this surah, because of its extreme position, is frequently highlighted in Islamic traditions and narrations. However, to avoid confusing Western readers, some Muslim translators have put some of its parallels in English in parentheses. As for Dawood's choice of terminology, only the dead Romans have heard this word. While Rodwell has only given a number for the surah before turning around and noting it as ‘the opening of the book’ in his footnotes. At the same time, Arberry has selected a literal translation. Actually, many titles are given to this surah,

as taken from Islamic narrations and books, such as Fatihat-ul-Kitab, Umm-ul-Kitab, Ummul-Qur'an, Sab'-ul-Mathani and Al-Hamd.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (الفاتحة 1)

A. Christian translators:

- i. Rodwell: -----
- ii. Arberry: **In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate**

B. Jewish translators:

- i. Dawood: **In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful**

C. Muslim translators:

- i. Pickthall: **In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful**
- ii. Bewley: **In the name of Allah, All-Merciful, Most Merciful**
- iii. Maududi: **In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful**
- iv. Al-Hilali and Khan: **In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful**

In the above-mentioned translations, there are some agreements and disagreements among them. As we can see, the Christian translations are similar, except for substituting the last two words in each, which is not quite significant. In the Islamic translations, we notice a clear difference because they all use the word Allah instead of God. Thus, the most prominent difference in these translations is the preservation of the word “Allah” in all Islamic translations, as opposed to the word “God” in Christian and Jewish translations. This difference stems from the Muslim translators' belief that the word “God” cannot fulfill the verbal and doctrinal connotations of the word “Allah.” Pickthall explains the use of the word ‘Allah’ in all his translations is due to the impossibility of having or obtaining a corresponding term, and for this reason, the Arabic term has been adopted to preserve the Islamic identity and the essence of monotheism in Islam.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (الْفَاتِحَةُ 2)

A. Christian translators:

- i. Rodwell: Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds!
- ii. Arberry: Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being,

B. Jewish translators:

- i. Dawood: Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe

C. Muslim translators

- ii. Pickthall: Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,
- iii. Bewley: Praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds,
- iv. Maududi: Praise is only for Allah, the Lord of the Universe,
- v. Al-Hilali and Khan: All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord
- vi. of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists).
- vii. Yusuf Ali: Praise be to Allah: The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds

In translating this verse, there are two important terms: the lord and 'alamin.' All translations have used the word 'lord', except for the translation of Yusuf Ali, who intends to use 'The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds'. The reason for that is due to the Christian influence on most translators, as the translation of the word 'Lord' have already appeared in most translations of the books of the Gospels or Bibles. Therefore, Yusuf Ali's translation has been more convenient with the term. As for Al-Hilali and Khan's translation, they take the word 'alamin' 'worlds' out of the circle of its comprehensible meanings to the Western readers besides the tautology of the explanatory sentences they put for the two words: praises and thanks. Alamin , as a term, has the singular form of 'alam', which means 'the world' and it is a collective noun for different creatures sharing common features, time, and place. There are "the world of Man, the world of animals, the world of plants, the world of the East, the world of the West, the world of today, and the world of yesterday". Therefore, the term 'alam', which is a plural collective noun refers to the 'universe'. It is mentioned by The writer of the Al-Manar that Imam al-Sadiq (as) said that the item 'alamin' refers to 'peoples' only. As a result, the researchers believe that thi item should be translated with the same meaning. Take it out of the circle understood by the Western reader.

To Muslims, *Allah* is a proper name belonging to God, who is also believed to be the Creator and the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth, as well as all that is within them. *Al-Rahman* and *Al-Raheem* are names and adjectives of Allah derived from the word *rahmah* (mercy). In Arabic

grammar, both are intensive forms of *merciful* (i.e., *extremely merciful*). Yusuf Ali used the word *Most*, but it still fails to convey the fullness of the idiomatic meaning. Arberry's translation, meanwhile, carries even less weight in this regard. Referring to Allah, the Arabic term *Rabb* is translated as *Lord*, and includes meanings such as *owner, master, ruler, controller, sustainer, provider, guardian, and caretaker*.

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ (الفاصلة 3)

A. Christian translators

- i. Rodwell: **The Compassionate, the Merciful!**
- ii. Arberry: **The All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate,**

B. Jewish translators:

- i. Dawood: **The Compassionate, the Merciful**

C. Muslim translators

- i. Pickthall: **The Beneficent, the Merciful.**
- ii. Bewley: **The All-Merciful, the Most Merciful,**
- iii. Maududi: **The All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful,**
- iv. Al-Hilali and Khan: **The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.**
- v. Yusuf Ali: **Most Gracious, Most Merciful.**

Here, we notice the variation in the three categories of translations in choosing appropriate words or adjectives regarding their grammatical and morphological functionality. Accordingly, there is a similarity among most translations in rendering the Arabic word 'al-Rahim' into 'the Merciful,' except Arberry's, who has chosen 'the All-Merciful.' However, not all translations agree on translating the aforementioned Arabic word, and subsequently, it has been remarked on in four different formulae. The most frequently used one was the word "the All-Compassionate" or "The Compassionate," then it was followed by the superlative "the Most Gracious"; however, the least used construction was "The Beneficent."

In the Qur'an, Allah is also described as *Raheem* (*continually merciful*) and *Rahman*, which carries a wider meaning of being merciful to all creations. Justice is a part of this mercy. *Raheem* includes the concept of being especially and specifically merciful to believers, and forgiveness is also a part of this mercy. In addition, *rahman* and *raheem* are adjectival, referring to the attributes of Allah. In the first verse of *Surah Al-Fatiha*, *Al-Rahman* and *Al-Raheem* are idiomatic

collocations. Most translators demonstrate the utilization of the superlative *Most*, which largely drives home the message of the original.

As for the researchers, these are two noble attributives or qualifying adjectives which must be differentiated in translation. Firstly, “The Most Merciful” is an exaggeration, and “the All-Compassionate” is a qualifying adjective or a participle in relation to the same two terms when applied to a human creature, but there is no exaggeration in relation to Him, Almighty, or His compassionate mercy. Secondly, both are derived from “mercy” in an exaggerated manner, which is tenderness and sympathy, although the adjective “the Most Merciful” is more exaggerated than the one of “The Beneficent” because the morphological construction of “faeilan” in the Arabic language is more exaggerated than the active construction of “faeil” as it gives more spaciousness and comprehensiveness.

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (الفاتحة 4)

A. Christian translators

- i. Rodwell: King of the day of reckoning!
- ii. Arberry: The Master of the Day of Doom

B. Jewish translators:

- i. Dawood: Sovereign of the Day of Judgement

C. Muslim translators

- i. Pickthall: Owner of the Day of Judgement,
- ii. Bewley: the King of the Day of Judgment.
- iii. Maududi: the Master of the Day of Judgement.
- iv. Al-Hilali and Khan: The only Owner (and the only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e., the Day of Resurrection).
- v. Yusuf Ali: Master of the Day of Judgement.

This item (owner, master, or king) in any form used is in the sense of appropriation, enclosure, and containment, whether it is in relation to the creation or in relation to order and sovereignty. Therefore, the above translators are divided in translating the Arabic word “malik,” “the King,” “the Master,” or “the Owner”. This may be due to semantic or linguistic issues or religious or ideological affiliations. For example, Rodwell and Bewley have used the word “king.” Arberry, Maududi, and Yusuf Ali have preferred to use “master.” Pickthall and Al-Hilali and Khan have favoured the word “owner,” but Dawood has singled out the use of the word “sovereign.” Still, the ownership of that specific day necessitates its ownership of all the worlds preceding it in the same way that the outcomes require the premises. Also, it may be more appropriate to read the

word as ‘Malik’ since ‘Malikiyah’ in Arabic includes the ownership of all parts and all particulars.

As for the translation of “Malik Yomuddin,” many translators such as Arberry, Pickthall, Bewley, and Maududi have preferred to use the phrase “the Day of Judgement.” Such as phrase is the most commonly used linguistic equivalence. As for the other three used structures such as “the day of reckoning,” “the Day of Doom,” and “the Day of Recompense”, these are built on some rare or biblical notions, not to mention the lengthiness and elaboration practiced by the two translators, Al-Hilali and Khan, which have brought the religious text out of its true meanings. To the researchers, what is meant by “the day” here is time, although it is used to refer to a time in which there is no darkness, of course. It is not restricted by a specific limit, and for this reason, the day was not mentioned in the Qur’an in contrast to the night, but rather the day was mentioned in its opposite. As for “Yomuddin”, it is the penalty or “the Day of Judgment” which is the day of recompense for deeds and their reckoning. What is understood from all the verses in the Qur’an is that man, from the beginning of his occurrence until his immortality, is in two days: the day of action, which is expressed by (this world), and the day of reward, which is expressed by (the Hereafter), or “the Day of Resurrection”.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (الفاحة 5)

A. Christian translators

- i. Rodwell: **Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help.**
- ii. Arberry: **Thee only we serve, to Thee alone we pray for succour.**

B. Jewish translators:

- i. Dawood: **You alone we worship, and to You alone we turn for help**

C. Muslim translators

- i. Pickthall: **Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help.**
- ii. Bewley: **You alone we worship, You alone we ask for help.**
- iii. Maududi: **Thee alone we worship and to Thee alone we pray for help.**
- iv. Al-Hilali and Khan: **You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).**
- v. Yusuf Ali: **Thee do we worship, And Thine aid we seek.**

The repetition of the word “thee or you,” which is used here in the denominator of restriction, is only to confirm such a restriction and to stretch its meaning to every type of worship or search for help which requires the help of Him in all matters. We have noted that the above translators have

been divided into two groups regarding using the pronoun “you or thee.” Thee is preferred in biblical translations, which is not quite understandable by common readers. The researchers believe that the limitation benefits from the separation of the pronoun and its submission, and the limitation dissolves into negation and affirmation as if one has said: We do not worship anyone, but You, and we worship You, as in there is no god but Allah.

Nevertheless, all the translators have denoted the restriction by using only the words, alone and only which is the right way. The mentioning of “we worship” and “we ask for help” is stated in the plural, either in consideration of the reciter and those with Him of the guardian angels or in consideration of those who are with Him in the congregational prayer. Worshiping Him and seeking help from Him are inseparable collocation because worshiping Him means seeking help from Him, just as seeking help indicates worshiping Him. This shows that the slave does not attribute anything to himself, as it is contrary to the politeness of slavery. It is clear evidence of the nullification of compulsion and authorization. Therefore, all the translators are right, except for Arberry, who has selected the word “we serve,” which is commonly used in Christian theology. At the same time, “asking for help” seems the right choice among most translators here, though some of them, such as Yusuf Ali, Maududi, and Arberry, have chosen ancient and rare theological and poetic words.

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (الْفَاتِحَةُ 6)

A. Christian translators

- i. **Rodwell: Guide Thou us on the straight path.**
- ii. **Arberry: Guide us in the straight path.**

B. Jewish translators:

- i. **Dawood: Guide us on the straight path.**

C. Muslim translators

- i. **Pickthall: Show us the straight path.**
- ii. **Bewley: Guide us on the straight path.**
- iii. **Maududi: Show us the straight way.**
- iv. **Al-Hilali and Khan: Guide us to the Straight Way.**
- v. **Yusuf Ali: Show us the straight way.**

This part of the verse represents the fruit of worship and the ultimate goal of seeking help. For guidance may point to the truth or falsehood, and it is either formative or legislative. In contrast to the darkness, “Sirat” is the path that leads to the desired. It is often used in the Qur’an, describing it as straight. Straightness is the leveling in exchange for deviation, and it pervades

everyone in terms of beliefs, faculties, and even psychological thoughts and actions (worship, dealings, and courtesies). Conversely, deviating from the straight path is falling into the darkness, which has many types. The translators of this noble verse are divided into two groups regarding the straight path. Rodwell, Arberry, Pickthall, and Bewley have chosen the phrase “the straight path,” while Maududi, Yusuf Ali, Al-Hilali, and Khan have selected “the straight way.” The other is correcter than the first because Islam is not just a path. They are also divided in translating the expression of “guidance; some of them have chosen the phrase “guide us,” and some have selected “show us.” For the researchers, the way is the path that leads to “Sirat,” and the difference of ways does not necessitate a difference in the origin of the “Sirat,” so the straight way and the paths leading to it are like the sea and the streams that branch out from it.

The word *sirat* occurs 45 times in the Qur’an, all in its singular form. In addition, in 32 of the verses that contain *sirat*, the word is modified with the adjective *mustaqim* (meaning *right* or *straight*). *Sirat* is a metaphor for the closest internal path to knowing God, for it is believed that every Muslim has a personal path to knowing God. In most Sunni-Shiite exegetical books, the word is discussed under *Surah Al-Fatiha*, Verse 1:6.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (الفاصلة 7)

١. Christian translators

- i. **Rodwell: The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious; with whom Thou art not angry, and who go not astray.**
- ii. **Arberry: The path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those against whom Thou art wrathful nor of those who are astray.**

٢. Jewish translators

- i. **Dawood: The path of those whom you have favoured, not of those who have incurred your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.**

٣. Muslim translators

- i. **Pickthall: The path of those whom Thou hast favoured; Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.**
- ii. **Bewley: The path of those whom you have blessed, not of those with anger on them, Nor of the misguided.**
- ii. **Maududi: the way of those whom Thou hast blessed, who have not incurred Thy wrath, nor gone astray.**
- v. **Al-Hilali and Khan: The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians).**
- v. **Yusuf Ali: The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.**

As can be noticed from the above translations of Rodwell, Arberry, Pickthall, Maududi, and Yusuf Ali, there is frequent use of obsolete second-person singular pronouns such as thou, thee, thy, and thine. Such uses are no longer used except in some Christian dialects related to churches and to address the word “Lord” in some churches. Specifically, thou art is the singular of you, and doth is an ancient form of does. On the other hand, the other group of translators uses a much more modern style and vocabulary. Additionally, since translation is a cultural activity, Bewley, Arberry, and Maududi have been influenced by many of their social and cultural factors. Therefore, they have used a common Christian word such as “blessed”; Dawood and Pickthall prefer “favoured,” and Yusuf Ali, Al-Hilali, and Khan choose “bestowed grace.” The same is the truth of words such as “wrath,” “anger,” “go not astray,” and “misguided”. The researchers believe that the choices made by the aforementioned translators are often unconsciously influenced by cultural factors as they start to absorb the new foreign culture (including language and religion); however, the translators’ attitudes are not open and should be very conservative;

otherwise, it will cause the improper translation. A clear example is Al-Hilali and Khan, who have added phrases and words not clearly stated in the original text.

Conclusions

Actually, there is an agreement among most scholars today that no text is fully translatable into another language with the same richness of vocabulary and the same depth of meaning. This is also true for the religious texts in the Qur'an. Its texts have been translated into English many times; however, no translation can render its literary magnificence and eloquence entirely. The issue of translating the meanings of the Qur'an is governed by many factors, which depend on understanding the different meanings contained in the Qur'anic texts, jurisprudence, and how true this translation is conveying these intended meanings. It also relies on the religious rulings and the exegetical notes contained in its verses, and it also relies on the language used to express these meanings.

Contrary to what some theorists think, the role of the translation does not stop at conveying conversations, information, or studies but goes beyond that. The researchers of this study have studied the linguistic problems that some translators may encounter in terms of understanding the words or in terms of sentence structures, which differ from one language to another, especially the difference in grammatical and morphological structures between Arabic and English.

The paper finds out that the eight translators' methods of rendering the Qur'anic collocations are diversified in terms of their cultures. Such diversity is based on the impacts of cultural identity, national identity, religion, region and living environment, among those who domesticate the original meanings of the religious texts into their Christian or Jewish culture as well as the original Arabic grammatical structures and among the Islamic translators who use foreignization methods that preserve the different meanings of collocations within the original grammatical and semantic structure of Arabic language. Still, most methods used have partially transmitted the original collocations, but ignore the entire focus of such collocations completely.

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وقائع المؤتمر العلمي السابع تحت شعار (العلوم الانسانية بين التحديات الراهنة والافاق المستقبلية) الذي اقامته كلية الآداب في جامعة واسط بتاريخ 2023/7/1

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