Religious Concepts that generate difficulty in translation from Arabic into English

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 Abstrac

Translation from a language to a target language is a difficult task. This difficulty is manifested clearly in religious texts because they usually contain specific terms that do not have exact equivalence. In the past, it is normal to say 'In the name of God' but the specialists in religion say that the word 'God' must be replaced by 'Allah' because there is a huge difference between the two expressions. In this study, the researcher discusses the term culture and translation with the explanation of its types and problems focusing on cultural problem because it is core of this study. No one can translate from Arabic language into English in a good way without having an idea about the two cultures. The word 'money' is uncountable in English but in Arabic the opposite is true; therefore, it is accepted to say to someone who gave you a sum of money "I will count them and it" while this is unaccepted in English. Be familiar with the culture of the target language is the best way to write a good translation. The aim of this study is to clarify the role of culture in translation and the effect of it in changing the connotation meaning of specific religious words. The study hypothesizes that the connotation meaning of specific words differs from one culture into another. The results confirm this hypothesis. At the end of the study, there are conclusion and recommendations.

Key Words: Translation, Translation and social context, Translation and Cognitive and Religious Concepts.

Conceptos religiosos que generan dificultades en la traducción del árabe al inglés

Resumen

La traducción de un idioma a un idioma de destino es una tarea difícil. Esta dificultad se manifiesta claramente en textos religiosos porque generalmente contienen términos específicos que no tienen equivalencia exacta. En el pasado, es normal decir "En nombre de Dios", pero los especialistas en religión dicen que la palabra "Dios" debe ser reemplazada por "Alá" porque hay una gran diferencia entre las dos expresiones. En este estudio, el investigador discute el término cultura y traducción con la explicación de sus tipos y problemas enfocándose en el problema cultural porque es el núcleo de este estudio. Nadie puede traducir del idioma árabe al inglés de una buena manera sin tener una idea sobre las dos culturas. La palabra "dinero" no se puede contar en inglés, pero en árabe ocurre lo contrario; por lo tanto, se acepta decirle a alguien que le dio una suma de dinero "lo contaré y eso" mientras no se acepte en inglés. Estar familiarizado con la cultura del idioma de destino es la mejor manera de escribir una buena traducción. El objetivo de este estudio es aclarar el papel de la cultura en la traducción y su efecto en el cambio del significado de connotación de palabras religiosas específicas. El estudio plantea la hipótesis de que el significado de connotación de palabras específicas difiere de una cultura a otra. Los resultados confirman esta hipótesis. Al final del estudio, hay conclusiones y recomendaciones.

Palabras clave: Traducción, Traducción y contexto social, Traducción y conceptos cognitivos y religiosos.

Introduction

Translation plays a major because a bad translation may cause a war. A translator must have specific qualifications. One of these qualifications is that he must be honest. He must know that changing the meaning of one word may kill many people; therefore the presidents choose their team carefully. They focus on the team that is responsible for writing their speeches. Within this team, there is a group of translators who studies texts carefully and they have an idea about the culture of the target language. The aim of this study is to show the effect of translation on changing the connotation meaning of religious concepts because of the factor of culture.

Religious concepts should be dealt with carefully because of the fact that says the idea of sameness is not found in language. The study hypothesizes that there is a difference in the connotation meaning of religious concepts which generates misunderstanding for those who have no idea about their real meaning. The results of study support this hypothesis. The topic cannot be presented without talking about the relationship between translation and society and the relationship between translation and cognitive.

2. Literature Review

"Challenges of Translating Islamic Religious Items from Arabic into English" is a study presented by Dr. Montasser Mohmaed AbdelWahab. He works as an assistant professor at Al Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, College of Languages and Translation, Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. This research tries to pinpoint or clarifies the problems that a translator may face when he / she translates Islamic religious items from Arabic into English. Translators are sure that such items pose serious problems and challenges because of their unique cultural patterns that may not be found in the target language. Because of the lack of resources, this study was confined to study problems of translating Islamic religious items from Arabic to English. First of all, the study presents an accurate definition of translation. Next, it shows an idea about the interrelationship between culture, language and translation. Then, it talks about the qualifications and the requirements that a translator of Islamic religious items needs so that he can produce an accurate and appropriate piece of translation, and the problems faced when doing so. Last, theoretical implications of the process of translation are discussed together with a variety of strategies that could be useful in translating Islamic religious items from Arabic into English. The study aims at establishing through practical application of translation approaches a framework for the translation of Islamic religious items from Arabic into English.

The second study is entitled "Features of Translating Religious Texts". It is presented by Abdelhamid Elewa Abdelhamid Elewa. He works as an associate professor of linguistics and translation in Al-Azhar University in Cairo. This article aims at exploring the different features of religious translation in an attempt to provide translators with an objective model to use in this domain. The researcher proposes a model of translation, starting from simple structures into more sophisticated structures focusing on phonology, morphology, lexis, syntax, and semantics, in an attempt to circumvent the peculiarities of the source text and translated text. Translation of religious texts is a key element in disseminating the divine message throughout history. It is employed also for teaching converts the basics of religion and for mirroring the beauty of faith and

morality around the globe. As a powerful instrument for missionary purposes, translation should be as accurate and precise as possible and must be in accord with sound belief; therefore, translators must understand the original source text (ST) and transfer it faithfully, accurately, and integrally into the receptor language (RL), without adding or omitting a single part of the original content. Dickins, Hervey, and Higgins (2002:178) argue, "The subject matter of religious texts implies the existence of a spiritual world that is not fictive, but has its own external realities and truths. The author is understood not to be free to create the world that animates the subject matter, but to be merely instrumental in exploring it".

3. Strategies for Translating Religious Terms

Newmark's model (1988:81–93) is adopted to have an idea about the translation of religious items. This model consists of:

3.1. Transference

This strategy appeared when a word in source language is transferred into the target language in its original form (transcription/transliteration). Examples are jihad, Suhour.

3.2. Naturalization

This step adapts an item of source language first to the normal pronunciation of the target language, then to its normal morphology. Example: kharijites, from Arabic kharij 'dissent'.

3.3 Cultural equivalent

An item of the source language is translated by an equivalent item of the target language while maintaining the same connotations. Example: heaven, hell.

3.4. Functional equivalent

This strategy requires the use of a religion-neutral item. It involves neutralization or generalization of the word of the source language. 'Alhudoud' literally means 'limits' or 'boundaries' but, in Islam, its real meaning is 'penalties or punishment for committing specific crimes or felonies'.

3.5. Descriptive equivalent

ع (needs to be explained by a phrase because it has no exact equivalent in the target language. We could say 'divorce said or initiated by the wife'.

3.6. Synonym

To use a synonym is to use a near equivalent of the source language to a word in a target language in a context where a precise equivalent may or may not exist. For example 'alwdou' in Arabic refers to washing of one's limbs and face with water before prayers.

3.7. Through-translation

Through-translation is also called a calque or loan-translation. It is a literal trans

lation of a phrase or compound from another language. Some examples in English are "worldview," from German Weltanschauung.

3.8. Modulation

This item, according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995:36), refers to a variation of the form of the message through a change in the point of view. It occurs when the translator reproduces the message of the original text in conformity with the current norms of the target language because these items in source language and the target language may appear with different perspectives. They mention eleven types of modulation which are negated contrary, abstract for concrete, cause for effect, means for result, a part for the whole, and geographical change. An example of modulation is kafir = non-Muslims (negated contrary). The word kafir is translated as "nonMuslim" because the lexical synonyms "infidel," "unbeliever," etc. have negative connotations and are used with some apprehension by the receptor audience.

3.9. Compensation

This component occurs when loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part or in a contiguous sentence" (Newmark 1988:90). It is to compensate for the loss of meaning in the translated text. An example is hajj = pilgrimage to Makkah.

3.10. Componential analysis

This is the splitting up of a lexical unit into its sense components. Semanticists tend to explain the word meaning through decomposing the word into its minimal parts. Then they piece together such meaning units to give the overall meaning of a word or a phrase (Cruse 2000, Griffiths 2006). In order to apply this strategy is important for the translator to see the degree of overlap or difference between the source language and target language terms and then identify the gaps in vocabulary in either language, when s/he fails to find a one-to-one correspondence.

3.11. Paraphrase

The meaning of a religious term is explained in more detail, longer than what we do with descriptive equivalent. But the translator should be careful lest s/he were to break one of Paul Grices' (1975) conversational maxims, the Maxim of Quantity: Don't say too much or too little.

3.12. Notes, additions, glosses

These techniques can be employed to add extra information about a religion-specific word/expression in the translated text. Translators often use transliteration when they fail to find an equivalent. To clarify such items, a translator can do one of the following procedures:

1. Add a glossary at the end of the book.
2. Use footnotes or endnotes.

3. Insert a partial or full explanation either parenthesized or free in the text, next to the italicized term.

The last point is adopted by many translateors because it makes the meaning of the item more clear.

 4.Translation

Basil and Jeremy (2004:3) state that translation can be defined as the result of a linguistic- textual operation in which a text in one language is rewritten or re-produced in another language. This linguistic- textual operation can be affected or it is subject to a variety of different extra- linguistic factors and conditions. House (2014:1) affirms that the interaction between 'inner' linguistic-textual and 'outer' extra- linguistic contextual factors makes translation such a complex phenomenon. These factors are:

1-   The structural characteristics that are manifested in constraints of the two languages involved in translation.

2-   The second factor is the extra- linguistic world which is different in source and target languages.

3-   Linguistic- stylistic- aesthetic features of the source text.

4-   These factors work besides the linguistic- stylistic- aesthetic norms of the target language which are internalized by the translator.

5-   Intertextuality governing the totality of the text in the target culture.

6-   Traditions, principles, histories, ideologies of translation holding in the target lingua- cultural community.

7-   The translational 'brief' given to the translator by the person/institution commissioning the translation.

8-   The translator's workplace conditions.

9-   human factors: knowledge, expertise, ethical stance and attitudinal profiles of the receptors of the translation as well as knowledge, expertise, ethical stance, attitudinal profiles of the translator as well as his/her subjective theories of translation.

   He (ibid) adds that translation can be defined as a builder of bridges, an extender of horizons providing its recipients with an important service to enable them to go beyond the borders of the world staked out by their own language. Lingua- cultural barriers can be overcome by translation. It is one of the most important mediators between societies and cultures in which different languages are spoken.

5. Requirements for Islamic Translation

    In general, to translate, a person needs only reasonable knowledge of a foreign language; an experience; and good dictionaries. Traditionally, good translation must have the following features: 1) It must convey the same s

ense;2) the spirit and manner of the original must be conveyed ;3) It must present a natural and easy form of expression;4) a similar response must be produced. Translation is not only an art but it is also a science so the translator must uses his intuition competence in all its types to combine them with his mastery of the mother language and target language to produce adequate as well as accurate translation. Nida (1964:50)

Gerding-Salas (2000:22) affirms that a good translator must focus on conveying not only on the words and structure but also on the spirit of the text. He affirms that the meaning of words is not stable of fixed but it is changeable. Because of the sensitivity of the subject, a translator should consider reading and writing a must to make him fulfill his duties towards the text. The success in translating religious items is determining by being aware of the connotative as well as the denotative meaning of the item in each Islamic context he translates from. He also must be knowledgeable of his religion and use the appropriate equivalent if it is available or use the same item with a summary explanation to it if it is not. A translator of Islamic religious texts must not only be bilingual or multilingual but also to be bicultural, or multicultural to make culture familiar to readers by changing the Source Language culture into the Target Language culture in translation. He must know that there are limits that he must not go beyond and avoid incorrect interpretation. He must also stay away from any critical situation and involves himself/herself in any forbidden area. He cannot change, alter or modify the original text or do whatever he likes.

6. Translation as intercultural communication

According to Hofstede (1980:10), translation is not only a linguistic act but it forms also an act of communication across cultures. In fact, translation can be regarded as one of the major means of constructing representations of other cultures. Translation includes both different languages and different cultures simply because the two factors cannot be separated. Language is culturally embedded or understood: it serves to express and shape cultural reality, and the meanings of linguistic units can only be clarified or understood when they are considered together with the cultural contexts in which they are used. In translation, therefore, not only two languages but also two cultures come into contact. For this reason, it can be said that translation is a form of intercultural communication. This more local situational context has to do with questions concerning who writes the text, when, why, for whom and who is now reading it, for what purpose etc. These different questions in turn are reflected or changed in how the text is written, interpreted and read.

Hall (1976: 5) argues that the context of situation is itself manifested or embedded in the larger sociocultural world as it is depicted in the text and in

the real world. If translation is a form of intercultural communication between members of different lingua- cultural groups with their often diverging knowledge sets, values, histories, traditions, legal systems, attitudes, social and regional backgrounds, we need to look briefly at the main research traditions in the field of intercultural communication. The 'new thinking about intercultural communication' takes account of this complexity and regards culture as diversified, fluid, dynamic, hybrid, constructed and emergent, and recognizes that boundaries in the globalized world are increasingly blurred and negotiable, and 'cultures' are interconnected in multiple interactions and exchanges.

Halliday(1999: 239) shows that questions about the effects or the influence of ' culture' on individuals and on translation need to be found or presented as responses to questions showing, for example, who makes culture in this situation relevant to whom, where and in which context and for which purpose. Such responses also help in creating intercultural understanding, an important prerequisite which is necessary for evaluating translations. In the past, in studies on intercultural understanding, the focus was on failure, 'culture shock', 'clashes of civilization' or misunderstanding. The new thinking on intercultural communication focuses on or shifts towards examining how intercultural understanding is managed in certain communities of practice. Intercultural understanding can be regarded the basis of a crucial concept in translation: that of functional equivalence. Functional equivalence is a condition for intercultural understanding. It is defined as the success with which intercultural communication is made to function through the provision of 'common ground'. The link between functional equivalence which serves as a conceptual basis of translation and intercultural understanding (as a basis of intercultural communication) is highlighted in functional pragmatics via the concept of the 'dilated speech situation'.

The researchers show that Paradis's model of the translator's bilingual brain can combine with a functional pragmatic translation theory. This theory explicates or clarifies how pragmatic, textual and lexico- grammatical meanings are rendered in a different context, with the translation being either functionally equivalent to the original text or a complete contextual adaptation to the new socio- cultural environment. These two main types of translation which can be either overt or covert translation, hypothesised in this theory, are outcomes of different types of re- contextualisation procedures making qualitatively different cognitive demands on the translator: overt translation is cognitively complex while covert translation is simple.

7. Translation as social action in context

Baker and Perez- Gonzalez (2011: 44) affirm that the inherently reflective nature of translational action manifests or reveals itself in a translator's focus on the situatedness of a text, and his/her recognition of the interconnectedness of text and context. As texts travel or transmit across time, space and different orders of indexicality in translation, re- contextualised must be done to these texts to be understood. A good translator must explore or understand text in context to write a good translation. Recently, such re- contextualisation in translation involved contexts characterized by radically unequal power relations between individuals, groups, languages and literatures. The specialists have looked at the impact the performance of translators has had on the different parties in a war zone, whether and how translators align themselves with their employers or refuse to do so, and how personally involved they become in situations of conflict and violence. One of the recent disciplines used to demonstrate discursive negotiations of competing narratives of war and conflict through translational acts is narrative theory.

Baker (2006: 5) shows that in the wake of rapid technological advances and the need to spread information efficiently and quickly through instant mediation, translation has substantially grown in importance in the globalised, de-territorialised space. The impact and effect of English as a lingua franca has recently been investigated in corpus- based investigation of translation as a site of language context in a globalised world. For a number of years, corpora have been an important methodological tool in translation studies, facilitating detailed analyses of patterns of translation shifts and changes, and enabling translation scholars to compare vast numbers of translations with originals in the two languages involved.

New information and communication technologies in a globalised world have or play an increasingly a major role in enabling a novel participatory culture where professional and ad hoc lay translators engage in the production of free translations for widespread public consumption. The impact or the effect of new media cultures and new practices on translation and the necessity to take into account complex new audiences is one of the foremost challenges in the field of translation studies today. Another recent development in translation studies is that that deals with the questions of ethics in translation.

8. Translation as a cognitive process

Shreve and Angelone (2010: 10) state that apart from the social contextual approach to translation, there is another important trend which looks at translation as a cognitive process. Cognitive aspects of translation and the process of translation in the translator's mind have been investigated for over 30 years with a recent upsurge of interest. This increase in interest about 'what goes on in translators' heads' owes much to the availability of modern instruments and

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methods for the empirical investigation of particular aspects of a translator's performance.

According to O'Brien (2013:6), the influence of these disciplines and their particular research directions and methodologies on translation studies is at the present time something of a one- way affair. Over and above a concern with new technological and experimental means of tapping the cognitive process of translation, a new combination of a theory of translation and a neuro- functional theory of bilingualism has also recently been suggested. This new linguistic- cognitive orientation in translation studies emerges from a critical assessment of the validity and reliability of introspective and retrospective thinking- aloud studies and of various behavioural experiments and the usefulness and relevance of recent bilingual neuro- imaging studies.

House(2013a:50) argues that translation can be looked at from two perspectives: a social perspective which takes account of the macro and micro contextual constraints that impinge on translation, and a cognitive perspective which focuses on the 'internal' way a translator goes about his or her task of translating. Both are complementary, and both can be split up into different domains and fields of inquiry such as different genres (e.g. literary translation) or the role translation has played in language learning and teaching, or the assessment of the quality of a translation. This range of interests and perspectives clearly shows that translation is a multidisciplinary and complex field.

9. Data Analysis

Transferring the intended meanings of the source language integrally into the target language is the task that the translator should strive to achieve it. Sometimes translators cannot find direct equivalents to a number of words or expressions of source language in the target language because the meaning or the semantic relationships that hold between words or expressions may differ from one language to another. Translating sacred texts gives little freedom to a translator to achieve his task. Translation of religious concepts from Arabic into English is not a simple task because these concepts must be translated accurately and appropriately. Muslims use specific concepts which are found to be suitable in their own culture. Most of these concepts are used in Ramadan which is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. It begins with the sighting of the new moon. During this month, Muslims are obligated to abstain completely from food, drink and sexual relations from dawn to sunset. Fasting is not obligatory for those who are sick or traveling long distances.

) cannot be translated into (I am fasting) because the connotation meaning of (fasting) is صم) is Islam is that the man cannot eat or drink anything from dawn to the sunset while the meaning of (fasting) in Western culture is different It

means that the man can eat specific kinds of food, drink anything and making love at any time. All the Islamic religious   concepts cannot be translated literary from Arabic into English because they are found to suit the Islamic culture. AL Sohour and Fotour must be written as they are in Arabic because they are not found in other cultures. In the past, the word 'Allah' can be replaced by 'God' but this possibility is canceled because the specialists in religious affairs say that 'Allah' must be written as it in any text. There is a huge difference between 'God' and 'Allah'.

This study supports House's theory which focuses on two perspectives: a social perspective which takes in consideration all contextual constraints that impinge on translation and a cognitive perspective which deals with the inner schemata of the translator to decide the acceptability of his/ her translation. These two perspectives work together to produce a good translation.

10. Conclusion

Culture has its own role in determining the meaning of any word. This fact can change the behaviour of human being and the meaning of their words. For this reason, Muslim cannot pray if he has a dog in his house while in western societies he can do that. In the past, people used to translate Islamic religious vocabularies literary regardless of their connotation meanings. This phrase 'In the name of God' was accepted in Arabic culture but now it must be replaced by 'In the name of Allah'. Understanding the connotation meaning of vocabularies is necessary to translate from one culture to another. This phrase 'I am م).

A translator of Islamic religious items has more than one option when he translates them. He can adopt the same item because it is found in two languages. It is found under the umbrella of effective borrowing. 'Allah' and 'Jihad' are common words and they are known by the entire world while other items must be accompanied either by its target language counterpart or a little explanation. Paraphrasing or to be put in a footnote is another solution. The option of using transliteration in translating religious items is the better solution to keep or maintain the privacy of each religion and keeps its identity.

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