EXPLORING SOME PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING SOME RELIGIOUS EXPRESSIONS FROM ARABIC TO ENGLISH ENCOUNTERED BY 7TH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT IN SEBHA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the problems that face translation students in translating some religious expressions. In different religious occasions into English language. This study found some problems that face 7th semester translation students in translating expressions used by them in Islamic occasions. This problems are related to the voids in cultures, differences between both language styles and the lack of equivalences in English language. And discuss a variety of strategies that could be useful in translating religious expressions items from Arabic into English. In sum, The sample of the study small number of participants. And the method we used to collecting the data quantitative using open-ended questionnaire. The cause of these problems as obtained from findings of the study are the lack of experience in the culture of the target Language users, the lack of knowledge in both languages structures and the lack of special references for the items. In conclusions the findings of the study suggested some solutions. Including training, designing materials.

Key word: Translation, religious, Expressions.
TEBELE FOR ABBREVIATION

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<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td>Source language</td>
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<td>TL</td>
<td>Target language</td>
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<tr>
<td>PBUH</td>
<td>Peace be upon him</td>
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Chapter One
1.1 introduction

In the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, translation is defined as "A written or spoken rendering of the meaning of a word or text in another language." Catford (1965:20) defines translation as the "replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language". Newmark (1988) looks at translation as a process of replacing one written statement in a source language (SL) by the same message in the target language (TL).

All the previous definitions of translation have something in common since they focus on defining translation as a process of seeking appropriate equivalents and transforming expressions, meaning and messages from one language into another.

Since global educational revolution has already begun, translation becomes more required than the past. This is effected by many changes and development in life fields such as technology, communication, transportations, religion, politics, cultures and others. This makes the life easier than the past, particularly travelling from country to another. These issues led to the popularity of Islam all over the world which the religious of Almighty Allah and his messenger Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). This is the importance of Arabic language and culture. Thus, translation is the only way to convert meaning of the religious expressions into other language to continue the message.

Traditionally, translation is used to make religious texts available to a wider audience. It goes without saying that culture is one of the most difficult topics to deal with in translation since it causes various problems in the process of translation such as problems arising from mixing between the
denotative and connotative meanings of words, forms, address, and the problems associated with idioms and metaphors.

Therefore, language expressions are connected with their own culture. This means that not any language users can understand them except the language native users. This is because these carry on them some cultural meaning and messages of particular society. A translator should be aware to understand the meaning of the expression in source language perfectly in order to keep the sense of expression otherwise he/she will lose the meaning of expression.

That is, using particular translating strategies may help a translator overcome equivalence problems, cultures varieties, languages varieties and many items (Mehawesh & Sadeq (2014)). This really sounds as a big obstacle for translator to consider the meaning completely and perfectly. In addition, Arabic and English languages are two different cultures where Islamic expressions are connected mainly with Arabic language and nations' culture so the task of the translator is to produce simple and concise translation that is easily understood by non-Arab Muslims. Also the task of the translator is to produce the translation of Islamic expressions in their cultural entity since they are connected with the culture and non Arab Muslims cannot understand the exact meaning without referring to cultural aspects. So, this sounds very problematic for translators and makes them produce misunderstood, confused or wrong meaning translation (Dweik and Abu Helwah, 2014).

1.2 Research problems

Religious translation is different from other kinds of translation. It one of the most difficult kinds of translation as it needs much more precision,
carefulness, and cautiousness. And translation students 7th semester face difficulty when they attempting to translate religious expressions from Arabic into English language, they state that it is very difficult to translate religious expressions in other cultures or languages, particularly English language. The main challenges lie in overcoming ideational hurdles in translation as well as in dealing with terminology.

1.3 Objective of the study

This study intends to achieve the following goals:

1. To find out the problems that face translators in translating Islamic expressions.
2. To determine the Islamic expressions which translator face problem in translating as well as the occasion which these expressions are occur in.
3. To identify some strategies which translator has to follow in this type of translation to overcome the difficulties.

1.4 Research question

This study aims at answering the following research questions:

Q1- What are the problems that translator face in translating some religious expressions?

Q2- What are solutions that translator should use to translate religious expressions?

1.5 Research hypotheses

The researchers hypothesize of this study that there is specific reason behind why Islamic expressions cannot be translated perfectly. Which
reason is the lack of competence on the part of many translators which can result in literal translation of religious texts.

1.6 Significance of the study

This research is of great importance for translators in general and for English students in particular. It highlights the importance of translating Islamic expressions in relation to source culture and its effect on their translation, and the researchers claims that there is a similarity between religious text and literary ones because both of them are immersed by affections and expressiveness.

1.7 Organization of the study

This research has been organized into five chapters, the first chapter is introduction, the second chapter is the literature review, The third chapter is methodology, The fourth chapter is devoted to the findings, analysis and discussion. The fifth chapter is conclusion of the research.
Chapter two
2.1 Introduction.

This chapter focuses on defining the main items of research along with previous studies. It also discusses what religious expressions are, and their equivalent in literal translation.

2.2 Definition of the religious expressions?

Baalbaki (2008) states that expression is defined as a chunk of words that relate to some events to produce a meaning. (Jaber, 2005) a religious expressions is a sort of idiomatic expressions that is generated by Muslim culture and Islam religion norms. So, some of the religious expressions are related to prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him) and others to both culture and religion.

2.3 Islamic expressions and the culture.

Mehawesh & Sadeq (2014) assume that religious expressions are easier to be understood by speakers who understand slang language and related culture than those who do not. Their study concluded that, Islamic expressions are so associated with Arabic culture, So they should be regarded by translator to reveal the varieties between both the source language and target language.

Ghafel et al (2011) assume that translation is connected with culture and translation of cultural expressions is challenge, particularly when the translator translates between two exceptional languages spoken by two different nations. In addition to their assumptions, to translate idioms or expressions in this frame translator have to translate them connotatively.
Also, Shehabat and zeidanin (2012) conducted a study to investigate translation strategies, they argue that even professional translator may face difficulties when translating cultural idiomatic expressions. They point out that approximation strategy is the best one for translating cultural-specific items or expressions.

2.4 Problems related to translating religious expressions studies

Translating religious expressions items, in the main, is problematic. It seems to be one of the most recurrent challenges and difficulties encountered by 7th semester students.

The main problem lies in finding the right lexical as well as cultural equivalent for such items. One of the main problems for the translator of religious expressions items is to decide on which cultural issues should take priority: the cultural aspects of the source language, the cultural aspects of the target language, or perhaps a combination of the two. In his translation of the Bible, Nida (1964) gave priority to the cultural aspects of the target text when he focused on the semantic as well as the pragmatic nature of the meaning. He argued against fixed or unchanged meaning of the words. For him, the functional nature implied in the meaning of the words are rather important so he stated that the meaning of the words can be obtained through the context and it could be changed through the culture in which they are actually used. According to Nida and Taber (1969/1982), cultural translation is "a translation in which the content of the message is changed to conform to the receptor culture in some way, and/or in which information is introduced which is not linguistically implicit in the original". Therefore, your choice of a certain cultural strategy may result in source-culture bound translation either foreignisation or domestication.

Another problem is reflected in the inability of the targeted equivalent to convey the same meaning implied in the source equivalent. For example, when we are faced with words such as wudu, or itikaf, we instantly think of the lexical English equivalents. Ablution and seclusion. By checking their definitions in dictionaries, we will find out that these words are used to
refer to rituals or acts that contradict with their original meaning in Arabic. The word, "ablution" for example is defined in Merriam Webster Dictionary as:

1. the washing of one's body or part of it
2. the act or action of bathing

Both previous meaning fail to convey the implied meaning in the word Wudu which is used to refer to the Islamis procedure for washing part of body using water, typically in preparation for obligatory prayers (Salat), but also before handling and reading the Qur'an.

The same issue applies to the word seclusion which is defined in the same dictionary as:

1. the act of placing or keeping someone away from other: the act of secluding someone.
2. the state of being away from other people: a secluded state or condition.

Whereas in Islam the word I'tikaf is used to refer to an Islamic practice consisting of period of retreat in a mosque for certain number of days in accordance with the believer's own wish. It is most common during the month of Ramadan, especially the last ten days.

One of the problems that arises when translating religious expressions items is the rich implications included in it that make the equivalent even if it is available in the target language unable to convey the same message. When translating a word like "Infaq" which is one of the main pillars of the Islamic economic system and of Islam itself as a religion/faith and a way of life. Literally, Infaq is Arabic word for spending. However, it implies other meanings related to the purpose as well as the intention of spending which is not included in the word "spending". In addition to Infaq, there are few other terms that are used along with their derivatives in the Qur'an and the Sunnah to indicate the same connotation of the meaning with emphasis on different shades of giving.
The cultural conflict between the religious Arabic item and its English equivalent seems to be among the problems that the translator faces in translating religious expressions. In this case, the equivalent seems to be found but it actually may create a kind of misunderstanding for target reader.

2.5 Related Islamic expressions studies.

Ghafel et al (2011) conducted a study to find equivalences in Persian language for some English idiomatic expressions within the sewing frame. Shehabat and Zeidanin (2012) conducted that sense-for-sense translation can serve more naturally and faithfully specially in texts which have many cultural expression. The writers argue that target language does not need too much experience to decode much foreignised expression, it needs to be live between its people to acquire their cultural connotation. The researchers focus on Libyan daily discourse to infer cultural expression and translate them. They add, the cultural translation is so problematic and challenging that's related to the oddness and complexities of some expressions, where these expressions are difficult to understand even for people those have close culture.

In another study, Al Zubi (2013) assumes that Islamic expressions in holy Quran produce a deep meaning larger than that in any book. He adds that translation of holy texts into another language makes the meaning weaker than that in the source language. This may lead to violating the original meaning. Also, he states that the most difficult problem in translating holy items is that decoding the words with the same sense without any distortion. Thus, it is problematic to produce translation with the same sense because Islamic holy expressions involve psychological, spiritual, mental and ethical senses.

Bahameed (2014) states that translator should regard emotiveness in religious translation even in all translation types. In addition, translator should provide much effort to transfer the emotive expression meaning from the source language to the target language by applying strategies.
2.6 Some strategies that could be used to translate religious expressions.

Following is a detailed display of the suggested strategies that the translator could apply and use when dealing religious expressions.

2.6.1. Transcription with little illustration

That is one of the best strategies that the translator can use to overcome the problem of translating Religious expressions items.

It is supposed by Newmark (1988) to produce the concept as it is in the source language but in the letters of target language, the concept contain the same phonetic prosperities and then explain it in target language such as the word "الحج"/Alhajj/ (visit to Mecca).

2.6.2. Paraphrasing

Some Islamic items are compressed in meaning such that a long target language paraphrase is sometimes required to give even a rough denotative equivalent of the source language term. The translator finds himself unable to convey the message included in a certain specific item by using the strategy of transcription or the strategy of transcription with little explanation. And this strategy is supposed by Newmark (1988) to convey the same sense in source language but it produce in different words to simplify the term to be understood by target language reader. such as "مبارك"/Mubarak/ congratulation, make your life happy with this something.

2.6.3. Classifier

It is one of the most important and best translation strategies for its practicality and applicability. It cannot be used alone but it is always included in the couplet or the triplet strategy. The use of classifier replaces long boring footnotes or paraphrase. In translating Ramadan, we have to decide on its category, is it a name given to a man or to a month. It is better to be translated using this category into "the month of Ramadan".
2.7 Some examples of Islamic expressions in religious occasion and their translation:

2.7.1 Ramadan occasion expressions

يرمضان شهر الرحمة والمغفرة."

faithful translation: "Ramadan is the month of mercy and forgiveness."

مبارك عليكم الشهر."

faithful translation: "be bless in Ramadan"

اعانكم الله على الصيام والقيام."

faithful translation: "may Allah help you fast and perform voluntary night prayer"

رمضان كريم."

faithful translation: "May generously bless your month"

2.7.2 Eid occasion expressions.

عيدكم مبارك."

faithful translation: "wish you blessed feast"

عساكم من السالمين."

faithful translation: "hope you are safe"

تقبل الله طاعاتكم."

faithful translation: "May Allah accept your obedience"
2.7.2. Haj Mubarak and Wasey Messkour and Zinna Mafour and Tawala Arna tin Tor ".

faithful translation: "May Allah accept your pilgrimage, forgive your sins and never perish your good deed ".

2.7.3 Condolences expressions.

2.7.3.1. "عزم الله اجركم ".

faithful translation: "May Allah make your reward great "

2.7.3.2. "شكر الله سعيكم ".

faithful translation: "May Allah reward you well "

2.7.3.3. "يرحم ما فقدتم ".

faithful translation: "May Allah be merciful to him "

2.7.3.4. "ناسل الله له الجنة ".

faithful translation: "May Allah make him abode in paradise "

2.7.4 Marriage occasion expressions:

2.7.4.1. "بارك الله لكم وبارك عليكما وجمع بينكمما على خير ".

faithful translation: "May Allah bless your marriage, make your marriage life happy and keep you both united ".

2.7.4.2. "بال رفاه والبنين ".

faithful translation: "be blessed with harmony and children ".

2.7.4.3. "اسال الله لكم الدرية الصالحة ".
faithful translation: "May Allah provide you with righteous descendants".
Chapter three
Chapter three
Methodology

3.1 Introduction
The focus of this study is to explore how seventh semester students at the English department of Sebha university translate Islamic expression into English and what are the difficulties that they face while translating and which strategies they use to translate those expressions.

3.2 Research design
This study used one method in collecting data. The study applied quantitative approach, because the data was collected from a small number of participants using questionnaire for students. The design is exploratory as the study explores the obstacles that face students in translating Islamic expressions from Arabic into English.

3.3 Instruments
The data was collected by using open-ended questionnaire.

3.4 Participants
- Students participants

The open-ended questionnaire was administered to twenty students who are currently in their seventh semester.

3.5 Data collection procedures.
First the researchers met the seventh semester students at the English department and explained the purpose of this study to them. Then the researchers selected 20 students to fill in the questionnaire.
Chapter four
Chapter four
Discussing the data

4.1 Overview
This chapter presents the data analysis as well as the findings of current study, the results of questionnaire will be displayed below.

4.2 Data analysis
The data were analyzed method by referring to the students translation in the questionnaire depending on the liker scale of translation. The scale consists of four degrees, adequate translation, semi-adequate translation, inadequate translation and no translation. The data were divided in their usage into four religious occasions they are The month of Ramadan, Eid occasion, Death (condolences )and Marriage occasions.

4.3 Discussion and Findings..
Based on the results of the analysis, the percentage of all students translations of all occasions expressions: the frequencies of adequate translation (28 %), semi-adequate translation (24 %), inadequate translation (8%) and no translation (40 %). See the chart below:
as shown in these percentage, the findings of the study show that there were a lot of problems in translating Islamic expressions specially those in Eid occasion. That is, most of translators indicated that cultural voids, equivalence and language styles were most of the problems and difficulties that faced them when they attempted to translate Islamic expression in occasions such as Eid. The following section provides the translation of some expressions in different occasions conducted in a Muslim culture. the data are discussed separately according to four different occasions as following:

1. **Ramadan occasion expressions**: during the month of Ramadan Muslim use different Islamic expressions to meet the ritual demand of the month. This may include the following:
faithful translation: Ramadan is the month of mercy and forgiveness. all students translated it. but some of them translated the words "الرحمة والمغفرة" as a one unit in word "forgiveness" and / or the word" remission", whereas many students did not find the suitable meaning such as the word "pity".

faithful translation: "Be bless in Ramadan " some students did not provide translation to this expression. This because the that students did not have enough experience or knowledge in the source language idioms. The word" Mubarak " has two meaning whereas if it is pronounced "mabrok" it is negative meaning but in the second aspect if produced as" Mubarake " it produces positive meaning.

faithful translation :" May Allah help you fast and perform voluntary night prayer ". the majority of students face problem finding an equivalence for the word "Al qiam " the problem here is generated from the lack of equivalence in the target language. Also, many of the students translated the noun " Allah " to god, so some students lack for semantic meaning .

faithful translation: " May generously bless your month " or Ramadan is time for giving " the meaning depends on the context. "May people be so generous in rammadan or in Ramadan. the problem was with this expression; is involving a various sense and no equivalence in TL found. The mistake was in translating the expression word by word which means ( literal translation).

2. Eid occasion expressions: This includes the following expressions:

faithful translation :" wish you blessed feast " it is as expression very problematic to find a close word in TL for the word "Mubarak " and transliteration for the word " Eid ". some students translated it as " Eid Mubarak ".

faithful translation : " hope you are safe ". The problems, here is that students ignored the interpretation of the semantic
meaning of the expression. Some students translated the word "salimeen" as "fit" but fit does not convey the whole meaning and sense. In other word, the same word "salimeen" to be translated as "survivors".

faithful translation: "May Allah accept your obedience". The frequent error is transferring the word as "God" instead of "Allah" such as "god accept your obedience". Dadat (2015) state in Islam and Arabic language it is impossible to plural the name "Allah" and impossible to produce the word Allah in both genders it is just a male gender, so the translation of Allah as God is wrong translation.

faithful translation: "May Allah accept your pilgrimage, forgive your sins and never perish your goods deed". The problems faced by students are what do we mean by "mabrour" and what is the meaning word s3i ?. Also the biggest problem was with the phrase" tejaratan lan tabour" the problem here is that English language does not contain the same word order of Arabic language. Thus, every sentence in English does not involve the litter wa"و" between idioms. The mistakes of students' translation to the word "hajj" was transliterating the word pilgrimage. The phrase "تجارة لن تبور" in / trade will never fail /. The problem of this expression is that it is not used in the target language and not available in their culture.

3. Condolences expressions: This includes the following:

faithful translation:" May Allah make your reward great". The translation mistakes committed by translators were related to culture. Some translation of expressions in foreign culture such as "god bless his sole " or "god reward you " may be used for showing condolences but in fact these expressions are not fit for conveying Islamic expression. This is because these expressions do not entail the cultural and Islamic sense of "عظم الله اجركم". The frequent error was in the word "اجركم " the some translated it as "far, wage, rent".
2. "يرحم الله ما فقدتم " faithful translation :" May Allah be merciful to him " the problem here some students translated them literally. Thus, they performances were used by machine translator to produce translation as "Ruthless what you lose" , "pity for your died ". The problem here is syntactical one. This is because the translators dropped the subject . This may be related to the variation between both languages in linguistic properties and other problems are lexical and cultural . There is lack of dictionaries specialist in these items.

3. "شكر الله سعيكم " faithful translation: "May Allah reward you well" This shows that it is the person who prays to Allah to make the parents or family of the person who died to be patient and to reward them instead of their soreness and calamity, the students mistakes were in translating both the word شكر and the word سعيكم. Some translations were as "Thank God for your quest" , "I am sorry too" and " thank for Allah for your coming ". This translation changed the real semantic meaning . The problem is that some of students are not able to produce the shades of the meaning of the idioms. This means they ignored the strategies that are used in these case of translation such as approximation strategy.

4. "نسال الله له الجنة " faithful translation: May Allah make him abode in paradise " some student translations were as "we ask god to put him in paradise ", "we ask god to mercy him " or god forgive him ..The highlight problem in linguistic prosperities , that appears in pronoun "we" but the explanation for this expression is that does not translation as grammatical unit ..whereas every item should be translated , it deals as a concept involves request from Allah. Its explanation should be translated not as the string of words .

4. **Marriage occasion expressions**. This includes a number of common Islamic expressions used by Libyan Muslims as displayed below.

faithful translation :

1. " بارك الله لكما و بارك عليكما وجمع بينكمما على خير " May Allah bless your marriage , make your marriage life happy and keep you both united . The problem here were in translating the word بارك .. There is
not appropriate equivalence in English language for it whereas it conveys the meaning of agreement, bless or accord some students answer it in "baraka " and other did not answer . Another problem appears in the comprehension of expression بارك عليكما. So, the problems are to comprehend the expression and finding the equivalences .

2. "بال رفاه والبنين". faithful translation : "be blessed with harmony and children . The problems were as the preceded ones is found in the equivalences for the word الرفاه and comprehended of it. Some students translated it such as simple life, richness, luxury or happy life where these words do not produce the connotative meaning or hidden meaning. This expression needs to be comprehended before the translation. It has the meaning of the relationship between husband and the wife.

3. "اسال الله لكم الدرية الصالحة". faithful translation : "May Allah provide you with righteous descendants ". The percentages of translation were as following 4%adequate T ,26% semi-adequate T, 47% inadequate T and 21% no translation.

The problem is the same as with the preceded two examples with regard to the equivalences issue for the expression الدرية الصالحة. Only 4% of students could produce the closest meaning but the rest produced answers like good sons, obeyed sons and daughters, believed family .A considerable number of students did not answer. This because they could not find suitable words in English language. According to them, This expression is untranslatable expression. Thus , it is big problem.

In previous section , the data analyses and discussion answers the question that asks about what are the problems. The answers of this question came from the students themselves , the answer of these problems relate to the following :

- The students lack of experience in translation Islamic cultural expressions.
- The students lack of experience in target language society culture.
The cultural voids that are occurred between both languages.
The students could not be able to comprehend some source language words and idioms, such as بركاء والبنين, بارك عليكم and others.
The lack of equivalences in target language whereas these expressions are not used in the culture of target language users.
The linguistic differences between both Arabic language (SL) and English language (TL).
There are no specialists materials in this type of translation.
There are no specialists dictionaries for Islamic cultural expressions.

The solution for these problems, to answer the second research question are that:

- Students should be trained on these type of expressions by their teachers.
- Supply students with materials in both languages styles and prosperities.
- Supply students with the methods that make improve their knowledge about Target language culture such as watching films, reading stories, contact on internet, reading magazines etc.
- Design a specialist material about cultural Islamic expressions.
- Design a specialist dictionary to be reference for students in translation these expressions.
- Teach students about the strategies should be used in Islamic cultural expressions.
5.1 conclusion

According to what has been mentioned previously, this study reveals some challenges which face students translation in translating Islamic expressions in religious occasions. The researcher suggested that the highlighted problems that are revealed by the study findings are related to three primary items. The first is cultural voids between Arabic and English. This problem which is the most difficult to be overcome and solved. The second is minority of equivalences in the target language for Islamic expression. The third is the varieties between both languages specially in syntax. The concluded some causes for these problems such as the lack of experience in culture of target language users, the lack of knowledge in both languages structures and the lack of specialist references for the items. Some solutions are suggested by the study such as training, design materials specialist in this field of translation, and make correlations between translation students and target language users.

5.2 Limitations

This research has few limitations, The first limitation was "Time". This research was done in limited time. Another limitation we only found 20 students to answer the questionnaire, we think we need more students to answer the questionnaire.
5.3 References


Appendix

Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to exploring the problems that face students 7th semester in translating some Religious expressions in different religion occasions. Please translate this expressions carefully, your answers have really worth for us. All responses keep confidential.

Q1- Translate those religious expressions below:

1. رمضان شهر الرحمة والمغفرة
2. عيدكم مبارك
3. يرحم ما فقدتم
4. أسأل الله لكم الدرية الصالحة
5. تقبل الله طاعتكم
6. أعانكم الله على الصيام والقيام
7. حج مقبول وسعي مشكور وتجارة لن تبور
8. عظم الله أجركم
Q2-A  Do you faced problems when translating those expressions?

B- If your answer No, what are this problems?