

**THE TRANSLATION OF THE NAMES OF ALLĀH MENTIONED IN  
THE AL-QUR'ĀN INTO ENGLISH**

by

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

B	the basic element or the stem of a word
S1	the '-s' which marks plural nouns
S2	the '-s' which marks the third person singular verbs
R	the 'er' / 'or' which marks the noun of a doer
F	the '-ful' which marks adjectives
D	the '-ed' which marks the past participle form
G	the '-ing' which marks the present participle form
V	Verb
N	Noun
Adj	Adjective
Adv	Adverb

# THE TRANSLATION OF THE NAMES OF ALLĀH MENTIONED IN THE AL-QUR'ĀN INTO ENGLISH

## ABSTRACT

Allāh revealed the Al-Qur'ān, Muslim holy book, to Prophet Moḥammed (p.b.u.h) in Arabic that is a rich language in Mecca, Arabian Peninsula which is mainly a vast desert with unique geographical, cultural, and climatic features. Translators belonging to several religions, sects, and nationalities translated the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān into several languages; each to serve his objectives. They failed to do so to perfection because the Al-Qur'ān is a miraculous divine book. Since the vast majority of Muslims are non-Arabs and the message of Allāh is universal; it is vital to translate the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān into various languages. The aim of this research is to compare and examine the translations into English of a sample of 18 names of Allāh in isolation and context that represent different syntactic, morphological, and semantic categories carried out in four translations by five Muslim translators who belong to the main Muslim stream: Sunni (‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali, Muḥammad Marmaduke Pickthall, Muḥammad Muḥsin Khan and Muḥammad Taqiud-Din al Hilali, and Moḥammed Maḥmūd Ghali). The translated names are examined to find out how close they are to the Arabic names. Other issues are highlighted and reviewed such as historical review of translating the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān during and after the lifetime of Prophet Moḥammed (p.b.u.h), opinions of Muslim scholars regarding this issue, and principles of translating the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān. The study reveals that in some cases, the translators agree on a single translation to one name of Allāh; in other cases, they translate the same name differently, and/or use the same translated name for two or more names of Allāh in Arabic. The researcher agrees with some translations, disagrees with others, and suggests substitutes to some translations.

# **PENTERJEMAHAN NAMA ALLĀH DI DALAM AL-QUR'ĀN KE DALAM BAHASA INGGERIS**

## **ABSTRAK**

Allāh menurunkan Al-Qur'ān, kitab suci umat Islam kepada Nabi Muḥammad dalam bahasa Arab di Mekah, Semenanjung Tanah Arab yang dipenuhi oleh padang pasir yang luas terbentang dengan keunikan geografi, budaya dan bentuk iklim. Penterjemah daripada beberapa agama, sekta dan kewarganegaraan, menterjemahkan Al-Qur'ān dalam beberapa bahasa, masing-masing untuk mencapai objektif yang tersendiri. Mereka gagal melakukan yang terbaik kerana Al-Qur'ān adalah sebuah kitab yang menakjubkan. Memandangkan kebanyakan orang Islam bukan berbangsa Arab, dan mesej Tuhan itu bersifat sejagat; adalah amat penting untuk menterjemahkan makna yang terkandung di dalam Al-Qur'ān dalam pelbagai bahasa. Matlamat kajian ini adalah untuk membandingkan dan menilai hasil terjemahan dalam bahasa Inggeris tentang contoh 18 nama Allāh di dalam Al-Qur'ān yang diasingkan dan konteks yang mewakili perbezaan dari segi sintaksis, morfologi dan kategori semantik yang diambil daripada empat terjemahan oleh lima orang penterjemah Islam dari empat aliran Muslim yang utama: ahli sunah wal-jamaah ('Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, Muḥammad Marmaduke Pickthall, Muḥammad Muḥsin Khan dan Muḥammad Taqiud-Din al Hilali serta Moḥammed Maḥmūd Ghali). Nama-nama yang diterjemah itu adalah ditaksir dan dinilai untuk mencari kesepadannya dengan nama-nama Arab. Tambahan pula, isu lain yang diberikan keutamaan dan dikaji adalah seperti kajian semula sejarah penterjemahan makna Al-Qur'ān semasa hayat Nabi Muḥammad dan selepas kewafatan baginda, pendapat sarjana Muslim berkenaan isu dan prinsip yang mempengaruhi terjemahan makna Al-Qur'ān. Kajian ini memperlihatkan dalam beberapa kes, penterjemah bersetuju menggunakan satu terjemahan khas bagi nama Allāh, tetapi dalam kes yang lain pula, mereka menterjemah nama yang sama dengan

cara yang berbeza, dan/atau menggunakan nama terjemahan bagi dua atau lebih nama Allāh dalam bahasa Arab. Pengkaji bersetuju dengan sesetengah terjemahan, dan tidak bersetuju dengan lainnya serta memberikan beberapa cadangan gantian bagi beberapa terjemahan.



# CHAPTER ONE

## CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF NAMING

### 1.1 Introduction

Allāh revealed the Torah and Bible to Moses and Jesus respectively and they were provided with temporary miracles to prove their prophethood. But these miracles lasted during their lifetime only. Muslims believe that both books were forged as it is mentioned in several verses of the Al-Qur'ān such as Al Ma'idah 13, 41 and Al Nisa' " 46. Therefore, Allāh revealed His last holy message; Islam, to Prophet Moḥammed (p.b.u.h) in the eternal miraculous Al-Qur'ān while he was worshipping Him in the cave of Hira, *Ghār Ḥira'*, at the outskirts of Mecca during the month of Ramaḍan. While the former divine books were revealed in languages that are now dead, the Al-Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic that is a living language and spoken by millions of people including millions of non-Arab Muslims. The vast majority of Muslims are non-Arabs and although they might know how to recite the Al-Qur'ān in Arabic, they tend to use the translations of the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān in their languages in order to understand it. Furthermore, scholars, Muslims and non-Muslims, depend on English translations when approaching the Al-Qur'ān. Although the message was in Arabic language revealed in Mecca, Arabian Peninsula that is mainly a vast desert with unique geographical, cultural, and climatic features; it was meant to be for the entire human being.

Since the second half of last century, many translations of the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān in English have been produced all over the world. Both Muslims and non-Muslims carried out these translations; Binark & Eren state that there are over 295 of them (1986:13). Studying all of them would be a very difficult task bearing in mind that the translation process never stops and new translated versions are being produced from time to time. On reading and studying the translations carried out by non-Muslims,

we find that the aim of the majority of these translations is to defame Islam, Prophet Moḥammed (p.b.u.h), and create an untrue image of Islam for non-Arabic speakers in order to mislead them. Unfortunately, some of them are read and circulated extensively like N. J. Dawūd, A. Ross, and others. Meanwhile, Qadiyani scholars and translators aimed to provide a distorted translation to promote their religion: Qadyanism.

The main objective of this research is to carry out a systematic and comprehensive comparison of four translations of the meanings of the Al-Qur’ān into English produced by Muslim translators who belong to the Muslim mainstream: i.e. Sunni in order to investigate the translatability of the names of Allāh, the accuracy of the translations, identify equivalences produced in each translation, translation failure and loss of meaning, best translation, approaches of translating the names of Allāh, as well as identifying problems in the translated names. These translations are considered among the most read, widely distributed (except the last one as it was published in 2003 but it took the author 30 years to accomplish), and better acceptable translations. These translations used in this research are:

1. The Holy Qur’ān, an Explanatory Translation, Muḥammad Marmaduke Pickthall.
2. The Holy Qur’ān, Text, Translation and Commentary, ‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali.
3. Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur’ān in the English Language, Muḥammad Muḥsin Khan and Muḥammad Taqiud-Din al Hilali.
4. Towards Understanding the Ever-Glorious Qur’ān. Ghali, M. Maḥmūd.

By having a quick look into the four translations we find that Khan and al Hilali’s translation is the only translation among the four that uses transliteration, ‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali uses classical English and sometimes archaic words, Pickthall uses also old English, and finally Ghali uses contemporary normal English. Using transliteration in

translation helps English readers to read Islamic terminologies close to the original pronunciation. Several bodies adopted transliteration systems but this research will adopt the transliteration mentioned in Table 1.1 at the end of this section that is driven from Khan and al Hilali (1997) in their translation of the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān.

Chapter one examines, in brief, issues like background of the research, purpose of the study, morphology of Arabic and English languages, comparative naming practices in different societies and cultures, the translation of the meaning of the Al-Qur'ān, statement of the problem, research questions, scope of the study, methodology, and organization of the study.

Chapter two focuses on the historical background of the translations of the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān, and the opinions of some Muslim scholars on them. A survey of the English translations of the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān from the period of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) up to the twentieth century is presented. Meanwhile, translations of the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān in languages other than English are mentioned in the form of a table stating the languages, translator's name, and publishing dates and places. Throughout the research, the names of Allāh are written in Arabic scripts, as well as the transliterated versions.

Chapter three reviews work to present theoretical framework of analysis. It talks about 'word' and the different meanings it may have in different contexts and its relation with other words. Also, verbs, nouns, particles, clause and its different types, nominal and verbal sentences, and lexis and grammar are investigated. The modern approach to the study of lexis is also investigated as well as the meaning of lexical item, the collocation and its role in the study of meaning pointing out to the opinions of both critiques and supporters of the collocational theory. Furthermore, other issues are

investigated like the major types of collocation, related issues, and the significance of studying it.

Chapter four addresses the research findings, states the translations each translator provided, examines and discusses the translations of each name of Allāh, and proposes substitutes. Finally, chapter five presents the outcome of the research.

In this study, the comparison of the names of Allāh is made to explore the collocated names and other collocated words. The comparison is tackled in seven categories: names that exist in the plural form like **Muntaqimūn** (منتقمون) and **Warithūn** (وارثون), names that exist in the singular form like **al Waḥid** (الواحد) and **al Raḥman** (الرحمن), names that exist in the compound form like **Malik al Molk** (مالك الملك) and **Nūr al Samawat Wa al Arḍ** (نور السماوات والأرض), names that exist in the simple form like **al ‘Afū** (العفو) and **al ‘Alīm** (العليم), names of close meaning but of different roots like **al Raḥīm** (الرحيم), **al Ra’ūf** (الرؤوف), **al Tawwab** (التواب), **al Ghafūr** (الغفور), names of similar nominal forms but of different roots like **al ‘Azīz** (العزیز), **al Ḥakīm** (الحكيم), **al Tawwab** (التواب), **al Khallaq** (الخالق), names of different nominal forms but of one root like **al Raḥman** (الرحمن), **al Raḥīm** (الرحيم), **al Raḥim** (الراحم), **al Ghaffar** (الغفار), **al Ghafūr** (الغفور), **al Ghafir** (الغافر).

This study reviews the translations of the names of Allāh mentioned in four translations of the meanings of the Al-Qur’ān carried out by Muslim translators. Some of the translators adopt an interpretative translation that is approved by Al Azhar and the vast majority of Muslim scholars. The researcher agrees with some translation, disagrees with others, and suggests substitutes. The models of evaluating the translation were: principles of fidelity, intelligibility, communication load, and interaction.

**Table 1.1 Transliteration Table (USM)**

#	Arabic letter	Thesis Transliteration System
1	ء	'
2	ب	B
3	ت	T
4	ث	Th
5	ج	J
6	ح	h
7	خ	Kh
8	د	D
9	ذ	Dh
10	ر	R
11	ز	Z
12	س	S
13	ش	Sh
14	ص	ṣ
15	ض	ḍ
16	ط	ṭ
17	ظ	ẓ
18	ع	'
19	غ	Gh
20	ف	F
21	ق	Q
22	ك	K
23	ل	L
24	م	M
25	ن	N
26	هـ	H
27	و	W
28	ي	Y
29	Waw Mad	Ū
30	Ya' Mad	Ī
31	Alif Mad	Ā

## 1.2. Background of the Research

Translation is not an easy task in particular when translating a sacred text; for it is heavily influenced by the translator's linguistic and educational abilities. The translator's ability "is quite uneven between the two languages [source and target] and exhibits a wide spectrum of abilities – from passive skills to active ones, from learnt skills to acquired ones, from just the ability to frame grammatically acceptable sentences in one language to enviable stylistic mastery in the other language"

(Nihamathullah, 2000:22). In this regards, Nida focussed on the necessity of introducing what he called "*Dynamic Equivalence*" in the Bible Translation. He thinks that literal and traditional approaches are not as effective as dynamic equivalence which is concerned with the message of the text and the translator tries to re-produce the same message with the same effect in the target language.

Therefore, the same text may be translated differently. Based on mother tongue and learnt language, Nida (1964:149) divides translators into four groups: a) a translator who translates from a learnt language into his mother tongue, b) a translator who translates from his mother tongue into a learnt language, c) a translator who translates from one learnt language into another learnt language, d) a completely bilingual translator who translates from one mother tongue into another mother tongue. The vast majority of translators belong to groups a, b and c; and few belong to group d.

Since the second half of last century, many translations of the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān into English have been produced all over the world by Muslims and non-Muslims like Christians, Jews, and Qadyanis who belong to various nationalities such as Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, British, American, Indian, and others; each to serve his objectives, ideology, sect, etc. With floods of translations of the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān into English and other languages, it would be wise to investigate their correctness and accurateness. Several Muslim scholars like al Qurṭubi (2005) clarify that the name of Allāh is a vital issue as the more people, Muslims in particular, know about His names and attributes the more they get closer to Him, appreciate his forgiveness and rewards, as well as abide by His orders and guidance that leads to obtaining His content.

### 1.3. Importance of Names

Names are an important issue in human beings as they are real identifiers by which it would be possible to distinguish things from each other. They are an inseparable part of man's life, used in daily activities, and without them life would be very difficult. Names are not restricted to human beings and places only; they are also given to products and services where they are called trademarks that set up a relation between them and the consumers. The Al-Qur'ān states the names of many things such as some animals like horse, mule, and donkey (Al Naḥl, 8), birds (Şad, 19), insects like ant (Al Naml, 18), fruits like olive, palm tree, grape (Al Naḥl, 11), clothes like shirt (Yusuf, 25-28), body parts like heart (Muḥammed, 24) ears, necks (Muḥammed,4), animals like camel (Yusuf, 72), colors like white (al Qaşaş, 32), green (Al Kahf, 31), Prophets like Moḥammed (p.b.u.h) (Al Faḥ, 29), Zakariya (Maryam, 2), Mūsa (Ibrahīm, 8), numbers like three, four, five, six (Al Kahf, 22), and others like pen (Al Qalam, 1), star (al Najm, 1). Due to the importance of names; Allāh honored Adam when He taught him the names of all things before the angels (Surat Al Baqara 2:31).

Human beings have different naming patterns that differ from one place to another and in some cases they differ within the same society. This is because they are based on several criteria such as origin, religion, sect, race, and location. For example, Malaysia is a multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-religious country and by hearing the name of any member of this unique and harmonious society, it is possible to know the bearer's ancestors or religion. For example, Moḥammed is a typical Muslim name, Lee tells that the name bearer is a Chinese, and Krishna is an Indian name. Some details are provided in this research.

On the other hand, naming objects follows a simple criteria; the name is to reflect its physical features, nature, or habitat. This naming system is to convey a message to the hearer who will be able to draw an imagination of the object before even seeing it. This is experienced in names like Iceland, Greenland, Kuala "place where two rivers unite" (Kamus Dwibahasa Oxford Fajar, 2004:122), Lumpur (mud), and Pinang (areca palm) that is abundant on the island of Penang.

Names tell a lot about what people like and dislike, fashions and trends, religious, political, and other preferences. Some names, particularly surnames, bear the identity of a person or his origin. For example the name Moḥammed ‘Abdullah tells us that the bearer is very likely a Muslim as Christians do not name this name except for a few cases among Christian Arabs in Lebanon several decades ago. If someone is called Moḥammed al Maṣri, the surname tells us that he is the descendant of people who originally came from Misr or Egypt; Muḥammed ‘Omar, here ‘Omar informs us that the bearer of the name is Sunni Muslim as Shi'at have a negative perspective of ‘Omar and by no means shall name their children after ‘Omar (al Kalīni, 1968:246, al Karki, 1987:161, al Tusirkani, 1992:92).

#### **1.4. Translating Proper Names**

Translation is not a simple process that only requires transforming words from one language into another. Gutt (1991) defines translation as a special type of communication that aims to set up an interpretive resemblance between source and target texts in a way that is governed by optimal resemblance. Meanwhile, Vermees defines it as "a form of ostensive-inferential communication" (2003:90). Translation is an ostensive process because "it involves communicators in producing a stimulus that points toward their intentions" and it is inferential because "the audience uses the stimulus in an inferential process of comprehension as evidence for what those intentions may be" (Ibid).



When talking about the history of translating proper names, we find that it “was common not only in the Middle Ages, but has remained an active practice to the present day” (Albin, 2003:1). Despite being practiced for so long, Vendler (1971:117) considers it meaningless for proper names “do not require translation into another language”. Sciarone (1967:86) agrees with Vendler based on the fact that in general practice proper names remain unchanged when translated. It can be said that translating proper names is an important issue but involves decision-making, and the translator is to decide cautiously their meanings before rendering if he or she wants the receptor to accept and understand his or her translation. This process is to be carried out cautiously for most words have more than one meaning and the proper names are not restricted to labels only; they can be similes and metaphors as well.

Vermes (2003:93) suggests four methods when translating proper names: transference, translation proper, substitution, and modification. Transference is defined by Newmark (1988:81) as “the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure”. This opinion is in line with Catford’s “an operation in which the TL text, or, rather, parts of the TL text, do have *values set up in the SL*: in other words, have *SL meanings*” (1965:43, italics as in original). The translator tends to substitute when the source language name has a conventional equivalence in the target language like when translating geographical locations. Meanwhile, Catford (1965:66) replaces the word “substitution” with “transliteration”. Finally, modification that is defined by Vermes as “replacing the original name with a TL name which involves a substantial alteration in the translation of the form and of the analytic implications (if any) that the name effects” (2003:94), is used whenever the translator desires to modify the source language name if the target language substitute is unrelated or partially related to the original name. In this case, he or she may have to omit and add when translating the source language name.

### **1.5. Significance of the Names of Allāh**

Muslim scholars say that learning the names of Allāh and knowing the meanings of each name is the noblest things to learn because it is one of the means to know Allāh truly (al Qurṭubi, 2005, al Qaḥṭani, 2003, al Bayhaqi, 1990). How would someone worship his Creator without knowing His names and attributes? Muslims are to believe that Allāh is the Only One who has many names and attributes like: The Most Merciful who possesses limitless mercy, The One who knows everything and nothing can be concealed from his knowledge, does whatever He wishes; whatever He desires will happen, in addition to many others.

Based on the above, the Muslim may call Allāh by the names He called himself as well as the names that Prophet Moḥammed (p.b.u.h) used to call Him. The knowledge of these names and their meanings is an important constituent of faith (eiman) for it is amongst other pillars that Islam is based on. Senior Muslim scholars like Imam Ibn Taymiya (1970) and Ibn al Qayyim al Jūziyah (1973) point out that knowing Allāh, His names, and attributes are the noblest knowledge to acquire because such knowledge is linked directly to Allāh the Almighty and whoever attains it is truly dignified. Such honorable knowledge will lead to love and fear Him only and subsequently Muslims must observe His orders and directives. Knowing the true meanings of the names of Allāh will strengthen a Muslim's faith (eiman) and provide him with a strong motive to be sincere and dedicated when worshipping Him for they will certainly lead to the content of Allāh. Moreover, al Sa'di (1970:41) points out that the more Muslim knows about the names of Allāh and his attributes the stronger his eiman will get.

## **1.6. Morphology**

Morphology is a subsience of linguistic that deals with the word's internal structure. Many English words can be divided into smaller meaningful units or minimum units of meanings called 'morphemes' (Millward, 1989:2-3) but others cannot like 'write'. Nida (1992:1) says, "Morphology is the study of morphemes and their arrangements in forming words". Richards et al. (1985:183) define morpheme as "the smallest meaningful unit in a language" that "can not be divided without altering or destroying its meaning" (ibid, 1985:183) and define morphology as "the study of MORPHEMES and their different forms (ALLOMOPHS), and the way they combine in WORD FORMATION" (ibid, 1985:184) (capital as in original). Others define it as "a term for that branch of linguistics concerned with the forms words takes their different uses and construction" (El-Sa'dany and Hashīsh, 1989:600); and "The science and study of the smallest meaningful units of language, and their formation into words" (Pei, 1996:169-170).

In other words, morphology is the study of the internal structure of word, and the "collection of units which are used in changing the forms of words" (Bauer, 1988:74). And morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning that can be either free (like, for, lid, each, sink, etc) or bound that exists beside a free morpheme (like re-, dis-, un-, in-, -tion, etc.) (Algeo and Pyles, 1993:7-8). The word may appear to be a basic unit of meaning such as 'playback' but it apparently has two elements of meaning. The bound morpheme that occurs at the beginning of a word is called "prefix" like 'untrue' and the one that occurs at the end is called "suffix" like 'joyful'.

### **1.6.1 Arabic Morphology**

Arabic language differs from English in many aspects such as characters' shapes, direction of writing; number of alphabet, language structure, as well as most of the written Arabic texts is non-vowelized. Some define morphology as "the study of the

structure of words” (McArthur and McArthur, 1996:605); “a term for that branch of linguistics concerned with the forms words take their different uses and constructions” (El-Sa‘dany and Hashīsh, 1989:600); and finally it is “The science and study of the smallest meaningful units of language, and their formation into words” (Pei, 1996:169-170). It is worth noting that Arabic language consists of the following 28 consonant letters, the vowels are an important part of the Arabic writing and they are placed above and below the character, the root consists of three or four characters.

Morphologically, Arabic words are classified into:

- a. Verbs: Arabic verbs are driven from either trilateral or tetraliteral roots and they appear in two tenses: the past, and the unpast (present and present that refers to the future, imperative). Usually, verbs in the present tense are declinable whereas verbs in the past tense and imperative tense are always indeclinable. Due to the influence of vowels before and after the hamza (أ), it changes to other different realizations such as (أ, إ, ؤ, ئ, ئ, ؤ, ؤ) that are called the allographs for the hamza.
- b. Derivational nouns: They are derived from Arabic verbs and have Arabic roots that are semantically related to the root.
- c. Non-derivational nouns: They have the same features as the former but they are formed by concatenating the stem with prefixes and suffixes other than those for derivational nouns.
- d. Proper nouns: They are not particles, not derived from Arabic roots, and do not have verb forms like “‘Antar” (عنتر).
- e. Particles: They form a closed list and their number is relatively small.

### **1.6.2. English Morphology**

English morphology has two subdivisions: inflection and derivation (Millward, 1989:2-3). The first deals with word structures that are determined by the role of words in sentences like the pronoun he that has the forms he, him and his depending on

whether it is subject, object or possessive in a given sentence. Moreover, other inflectional affixes are like the -s used to indicate plurals as well as the -ed used to form past tense. Meanwhile derivational morphology can be prefixes or suffixes. The derivational prefixes may change the meaning of a word like the -un (untidy, unhappy, etc.). On the other hand, derivational suffixes may change part of speech and may change the meaning of a word like the -ness in 'cool' for it changes the adjective 'cool' into a noun (ibid, 1989). In addition, English morphology combines nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, or prepositions to form complex words. For example, godparent (noun + noun); blueprint (adjective + noun); red-hot (adjective + adjective); underweight (preposition + noun); and lip-read (noun + verb). Furthermore, a word in English may be changed without changing its form if used in a particular syntactic context like 'floor' (noun) 'to floor' (verb).

### **1.7. Comparative Naming Practice**

Many factors such as environment, culture, and weather play a role in establishing several naming systems in different parts of the world during various periods of time, and each nation or community designs its naming pattern according to its needs and beliefs, thus, there is no one naming pattern agreed by all nations. Although their differences; the basic concept of naming patterns lies in the fact that they confirm the existence of the person and approves that he or she is an independent entity that has rights to exercise and duties to implement. The names of twins are usually identical as parents think of their twins as a single person but with bodies sharing the same identity. Plank (1964) points out that the names of twins fit into three patterns: using names that start with the same letter such as Richard and Robert, Ricky and Robby, Joseph and Judith, Paul and Paula, Patrick and Patricia; the second pattern is names that have different first letters but with identical rhythm such as Tracy and Stacy; and the last pattern are names that are different from each other. Arabs and Muslims have similar attitudes when naming twins, it may be witnessed that the vast

majority of people who had twins give them names such as ‘AbdulRaḥīm and ‘Abdul Raḥman, Ṭahir and Ṭariq, Ḥafiz and Maḥfūz, Salman and Sulaiman.

Based on the fact that each person's deeds are different from the others; the name may become part of the society's history. In certain cases the contribution of a famous person (such as Prophet Moḥammed (p.b.u.h) or any of his companions) plays a major role in spreading it to vast areas around the globe. Meanwhile, the names of other personnel who also contributed positively but their influence did not exceed their own society; then their names are restricted to certain communities. On the other hand, the names of those who contributed negatively are seldom taken unless they were common names.

When parents search for a name, they mainly select a name that has a significant meaning to them. Therefore, they name their newborn babies in accordance with certain criteria that may differ from one country, society, and culture to another; moreover, within the same entity, people's preferences differ. The name would be based on the first name of the ancestor's father (patronymic), places or localities from which the ancestors originated; their occupation or status, or their features such as face, figure, temper, morals, or habits. Lansky (1984) points out that parent in the southern parts of the United States of America are more apt to name a baby with what northerners would call a nickname; meanwhile, easterners prefer traditional names and northerners tend to name after the Bible. The criteria may vary in accordance to parents' religion, culture, and belief. The Roman Catholics usually name after saints such as Mary for each daughter but pairing it with different middle names like Mary Catherine and Mary Margaret (Crandall, 1986); Protestants name after either the Old or New Testaments (Clark, 2000).

In English-speaking countries various types of naming systems are used. For example, the surname may be based on the father's Christian name like "William" that is used as it is or by adding the letter "s" and subsequently the name becomes Williams. Other surnames like "David" and "Richard" used as they are, or a suffix like "son" that means "a human male descendant" (Merriam-Webster Online, 2005) is attached. Therefore, the names mean "son of David" and "son of Richard" respectively. In other word, such names are shared in common to distinguish members of a certain family. The prefix "Mac" or "Mc" is derived from Irish and Scottish patronymics (The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 2003) and it is a "*common prefix in Scottish and Irish surnames*" (italic as in original) meaning "son of" (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000). Meanwhile, the prefix "Fitz" is borrowed from the French "fils" (AHDEL, 2000) meaning "son" and used in compound names "to indicate paternity" (Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, 1913). In the Middle English the letter "O" is a shortening of "of" (AHDEL, 2000) meaning descend of. For example, O'Brien means descend of Brien. The suffix "kin" means connected to or a relative of (AHDEL, 2000) like Tomkin. Furthermore, names may be altered over time like "David" that became Davey, Davids, Davidson, Davidge, Davie, Davies, Davis, and so on.

Based on the researcher's observations and personal knowledge, people may name after members of past generations but with a sense of ancestry. They derive names from the family tree or totems as well as from an event that took place during mother's pregnancy period or soon after giving birth. Some cultures believe that if a new born baby was given a name but later died then the same name will not be given to any future baby. Muslim religious families mainly name their children after Prophets and religious characters. But, others try to maintain their ethnic heritage such as the Afro-Americans who use the names of their ancestries. There are others who are named after famous personage or event. In certain events, parents are more

concerned about the sound and rhythm of their children's names such as the alliteration in Tina Turner, Pat Paulson, and Jack Black (Lansky, 1984). Others try to catch up with the newest event such as the Omani mother who gave birth to a baby girl in the early minutes of the first day of January 2000 and named her baby Alfiyah (meaning millennium).

Hence, by examining names it would be possible to know the person's or his ancestor's patronymic as the case in Robertson and Thomson; occupation as in Smith, Barber, Plumber, Baker, Thatcher, Taylor (tailor), and Stewart (Stuart or Steward); locality as in Wood, and Dunlop (muddy hill); Nickname as in White, Little, and geographical location his ancestors' belonged to or lived in as in North and West. Syria, an Arab state, hosted several ethnic groups that intermarried extensively over hundreds of years producing generations that do not hold any family name. This was confusing to the French colonial authorities particularly during the struggle for independence. Thus, the French introduced a law forcing every resident to document his family name and whoever does not have one is to be named after his occupation. Consequently, new family names came about such as Dabbas (the one who produces syrup from palm dates), Şabbagh (painter), Şayigh (gold smith), Haddad (blacksmith), etc.

Although names in Malaysia indicate a multi racial and multi cultural country; all groups share the importance of proper ranks and titles when addressing; 'Ali (2002) provides full details about this issue. Malaysia is divided into west, the Peninsular that is inhabited mainly by Malay, Chinese, Indian and also Orang Asli, and east that consists of Sabah (inhabited by several ethnic groups mainly by Kadazan) and Sarawak (inhabited by groups like Iban and Bidayuh). Consequently, several languages are spoken in Malaysia each group speaks its own language and practice its own religion:



Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity. Although names in Malaysia indicate a multi racial and multi cultural country; all groups share the importance of proper ranks and titles when addressing. Each group has its own naming system that is mainly based on individual's religion. For example, Malays bear Muslim names for the vast majority of them are Muslims. Names like "Moḥammed" or "Abdullah" are born by Muslims regardless of their ethnic groups: Malay, Chinese, Indian, or any other ethnic group. Example for Muslim names is "Aḥmed Bin 'Abdullah" for male and "Amīnah Bte/Binti Moḥammed" for female. Example for the names of Chinese or Chinese Christian is "Teng Swee Hock" for male or "Teng Lee Ti" for female. Example for the names of Indian either Hindu or Christian is "Ragunathan A/L Ramasami" for male or "Sumitha A/P Ramasami" for female (A/L stands for son of, and A/P stands for daughter of). Example of aborigine in the Peninsular and Bumi Sarawak other than Melanau is "Itik AK Ayam" for male or "Siti AK Abū" for female (AK stands for son of or daughter of). On the other hand, some Christians and Chinese may use Muslim naming system like "Alexander Bin Abraham" for male and "Amy Binti Patrick" for female; "Ah Meng Bin Ah Chong" for male and "Lee Ti Binti Ah Meng" for female.

### **1.8. Translating the Meaning of the Al-Qur'ān**

Muslims look at the Al-Qur'ān as an eternal miraculous sacred book that Allāh revealed to guide them to His path. They respected it and exerted all efforts to protect it from any distortion. Therefore, Muslims believe the Al-Qur'ān should not be changed or translated into any language. This was the opinion of Imam Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Imam Malik, Imam al Shāfi'i, and the students of Imam Abū Ḥanīfa. Muslim scholars believe and adhere to the Imams' opinion for over one thousand years believing that translating the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān may lead to negative consequences. But, Christians translated the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān into their languages producing deformed translations that do not convey the true words of Allāh and the principles of Islam such

as the translations of Sale, Rodwell, Palmer, and others. In an attempt to refute such false propaganda, Muslim scholars permitted the translation of the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān into languages other than Arabic language and the first Muslim translation was *The Holy Qur'an* carried out by Muḥammed 'Abul Ḥakīm Khan in 1905, published in India. The last (until the time this thesis is written) known translation is *The Qur'an, A New Translation* was carried out by Moḥammed 'Abdel Ḥalīm in 2005 published in London.

A question may be raised: Why translate or interpret the Al-Qur'ān? The answer is simple: It is needed when non-natives cannot read or understand the original text. But, it should be taken into account that when translating a rich language, like Arabic that allows for more than one meaning for different readings of the same text then the translation should approach the richness of the original to make the receptor feel that he is reading the meaning expressed in the original. The translator translates what he understands from the language of the source text. The quality of his translation is based on his competence in both languages and linguistic rules in bi-cultural mental efforts. Naturally, he cannot make the readers understand what he, himself, does not understand. Translating a sacred text, the Al-Qur'ān for instance, is completely different from translating any other text. The translator must possess "bilingual polysemic competence" and "two other discriminatory kinds of competence: grammatical and idiomatic" (Ali, 1992:490). The qualifications of Al-Qur'ān translator are addressed with details in this study.

Unlike the English language, Arabic is a language in which masculine and feminine is a feature reflected on almost all the content words and it strictly observes gender differentiation. However, Many *ayas* in several *suras* of the Al-Qur'ān (as in Al Shūra, 42 and Al A'raf, 7) there is an intentional deviation from this norm. Therefore, the translator should not ignore them; otherwise, the intended meaning will be affected.

Moreover, the translator must observe the personal or relative pronoun having different antecedents in one and the same verse, or the sudden transition in the Arabic text from the singular form of the verb to the plural (as in Ṭa-ha, 88 and Al Mu'minūn, 23). Based on this, the singular form is to be translated as singular and the plural form is to be translated plural. In the event when doing so is not possible, and then for the sake of honesty and accuracy, such linguistic deviation is to be mentioned in a footnote preferably without any comment. The translator must always consider never moving directly from the source language to the target language. Instead, he is to understand the source language in the terms of the source language, and then the whole idea is to be re-thought in terms of the target language. If the native speaker of Arabic, for example, understands from the Arabic text the same or equivalent to what the native speaker of English understands from the English translation then the translation is good. But, if the native speaker of either language understands differently, then, the translation is not good.

### **1.9. Statement of the Problem**

Several translators have attempted to translate the Al-Qur'ān from the original Arabic text into English. On several occasions there is not consistency in some of the translations due to linguistic and / or stylistic reasons, as well as religious and cultural effects.

In some cases, different translators provided many translations to the same name of Allāh. Why do we have several translations for the same name in various contexts? How close are these translations to the original name? Ultimately, are the names of Allāh translatable?

### **1.10. Objectives of the Research**

The main objectives of the research are:

1. Investigate the translatability of the names of Allāh and examine how they were rendered in the translated versions under study to examine the accuracy and faithfulness of the translations.
2. Identify the equivalence every translation produced to find out if the translated names convey the original meanings, and identify the closest translation to the original that maximizes translation gain and minimizes translation loss.
3. Identify failure and meaning loss, if any, when translating.
4. Identify the best translation with regards to language use that helps the reader to understand the meaning of the source language.
5. Identify approaches of translating the names of Allāh into English.
6. Identify problems in the translated names of Allāh and explore how to increase effectiveness.

### **1.11. Research Questions**

The present research tries to answer the following questions:

1. Are the names of Allāh translatable?
2. Do the translated names of Allāh convey the original meaning intended by Allāh?
3. Why is there failure, if any, in conveying the original message embodied in these names?
4. How can the reader get an access to the meaning of the source language through the stylistic and linguistic aspects?
5. How can the meaning of these names be translated into English?
6. What are the problems involved in the translation of these names?

### **1.12. Scope of the Study**

The study will be confined to giving a quality examination of four English translations of only 18 names of Allāh to see if the translations here complied with the Principles of fidelity, intelligibility, communication load, and interaction. They are discussed in detail in this study.

### **1.13. Methodology**

#### **1.13.1. Data Collection**

An extensive study of the Al-Qur'ān and its English translations under study is carried out to highlight and categorize the verses (ayat) that contain the names of Allāh. The names are identified and studied in light of the original text and the authentic exegeses of the Al-Qur'ān. Then, these names are investigated with reference to the four English translations under study.

Throughout the research, the data is presented and analyzed as follows: the four translations under study will be dealt with in the research analysis as follows:

1. The Arabic text of the Qur'ānic verses.
2. Translation of Pickthall.
3. Translation of 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali.
4. Translation of Khan and Al-Hilali.
5. Translation of Ghali.

Also, major books of *tafsīr* and work on Qur'ānic sciences are consulted.

#### **1.13.2. Data Analysis**

As the names of Allāh are collected, the study will be a combination of descriptive contextual, interpretative, and comparative. The data will be analyzed as follows:

1. Content analysis of the data, including textual and conceptual analysis in the source and target languages.

2. Contextual analysis of the names of Allāh to identify other linguistic implications within their context.

3. Relational analysis will be used to identify relationships among the names in order to obtain a clear understanding of their meanings.

### **1.13.3. Data Analysis Procedures**

The data in this research were analyzed as follows:

1. The names in the original source (Arabic), *tafsīr* (exegesis) books (Arabic), were studied, identified, and compared with the parallel translations of (Pickthall, ‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali, Khan and Al-Hilali, and Ghali).

2. Contrastive analysis were content analysis, contextual analysis, and relational analysis.

3. The primary outcomes identify translation problems and accuracy.

4. Concluding remarks discuss the outcomes, present overall conclusion, as well as suggestions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A REVIEW AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND OF QUR'ĀNIC TRANSLATIONS

#### 2.1. Introduction

Muslims and non-Muslim witness the fact that the Al-Qur'ān is a miraculous divine book. A. J. Arberry (1964:x) points out that “the Koran’s undeniable claim to rank amongst the greatest literary masterpieces of mankind” as well as N.J. Dāwūd (1974:11) believes “that the Koran is not only one of the greatest books of prophetic literature but also a literary masterpiece of unsurpassing excellence”. The Al-Qur'ān is so great that human mind, by no means, can comprehend its entire magnificent meanings, “Even the companions of the Prophet [p.b.u.h] ... although they were Arabs, sometimes found it difficult to understand certain parts of the Al-Qur'ān, or their understanding mutually different” (al Ṣawwāf, 1979:135). The Al-Qur'ān talks about several issues like the reason for its revelation, its universality; diversity of human beings, Arabic is the language of the Al-Qur'ān, as mentioned in several ayas of the Al-Qur'ān like (Ibrahīm: 1, Saba': 28, Al Rūm: 22, Yusuf: 2).

Muslims depend on many ayas of the Al-Qur'ān like the ones mentioned above to say that Islam is a global religion that must be delivered to all mankind regardless of their locations and languages. This task can be achieved by translating the meanings of the Al-Qur'ān as well as all other Islamic sources. This chapter will tackle such fundamental issues and how to deal with translations in this regard.

#### 2.2. The Al-Qur'ān

The word “Qur'ān” in Arabic is synonym to ‘reading’ or ‘reciting’ as it is stated in the Al-Qur'ān “It is for Us to collect it and to recite it. But when We have recite it, follow thou its recital (as promulgated” (Al Qiyama: 17-18). Due to the sublimity of the Al-

Qur'ān, Allāh honored it with six names that are mentioned in its verses: The *Qur'ān* in "Ramaḍan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'ān as a guide to mankind" (Al Baqara:185); *al Furqān* in "Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion to His Servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures" (Al Furqān:1); *al Kitāb* in "This is the book; In it is guidance sure, without doubt To those Who Fear God" (Al Baqara:2); *al Dhikr* in "We have, without doubt, sent down the message; and we will assuredly guard it (from corruption)" (Al Hġjr:9); *al Waḥyi* in "Say, I do but warn you according to revelation: but the deaf will not hear the call, (even) when they are warned!" (Al Anbiya':45); *al Rūḥ* in "And thus have We, by Our command, sent inspiration to thee" (Al Shūra:52).

The Al-Qur'ān and its "directness, naturalness and simplicity which could be apprehended even by the unlettered Arabs" (Saiyidain, 1950:40), that represents the utmost linguistic level of Arabic, has a massive impact on Arab and Muslim aspects of life namely the social, religious, political, and intellectual. It was revealed in Arabic as mentioned in several places of the Al-Qur'ān like Al Shu'ara' 192-195, Yusuf 2, Ṭa-ha 113, Al Shūra 7, and Al Zukhruf 3. Moreover, it has a unique style that cannot be imitated by any human being. Ibn Ḥazm, of Cordova, in his book *al Iḥkam fi uṣul al aḥkam* (1998) disagrees with the above theories pertaining to the priority of Arabic as no one knows for sure what the language was Allāh taught Adam. Ibn Sidah of Murcia looks at the issue as "such a perfect, noble, and elegant language could not have arisen except through God's teaching and inspiration" (Chejne, 1969:11).

The Al-Qur'ān specifies for Muslims all their needs and commitments that by fulfilling them, Allāh will be pleased with them. It also mentions how Allāh created Adam and honored him on many occasions amongst which were ordering the angels to prostrate for him. Adam was also honored when Allāh taught him the names before the