The Role of Using Islamic English in Solving the Difficulties in Translating Nobel Quran and Unification of Muslims

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Abstract

The problem with translating the Quran can be divided into translating the lingual form and the meaning. The meaning is the biggest problem because the Quran is not just another book; it is a book that is always understood differently by the readers. Several researchers emphasized that translation of the meanings of noble Quran to other languages is impossible in the same accuracy as Arabic. Words could be translated literally, but it is difficult to translate what those words mean deeply. The translation will make the meaning weaker and sometimes it changes it. Because of such difficulties, the translators of holy Quran create Islamic English; they expressed the Islamic nouns in its meanings without distortion, so several vocabularies have been appeared in English. This study aimed at investigating the role of Islamic English in solving the difficulties in translating noble Quran and unification of Muslims, It attempted to answer what is the role of Islamic English in solving the difficulties in translating and what is the role of Islamic English in unification of Muslims. The researcher prepared a questionnaire divided into two sections: the first one talks about the role of Islamic English in solving the difficulties in translating and the second one is about the role of Islamic English in unification of Muslims. The sample was chosen from English Department in the second semester of the academic year 2011. To establish the validity for the questionnaire, the method of content validity was used. It was given to a jury of specialists. The reliability also was established. The results revealed that Islamic English contributes positively in solving the difficulties in translating noble Quran and unification of Muslims. On the basis of the results of the present study, the researcher proposed a number of recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Quran, Islamic English, unification

1. Introduction

The Holy Quran is a permanent miracle revealed to Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). First linguistic value lies in the simplicity and inimitability of its rhetorical style. The Holy Quran's rhetorical beauty, precision and subtlety distinguish it from all other Arabic works of poetry, rhythmic or non-rhythmic prose. The language itself was one of the miracles of the Quran. The importance of Quran to a vast portion of the world's population makes the translation effort all the more important. When translating Quran from Arabic to English, something gets lost in the translation because the translation will make the meaning weaker. One of the most evident problems in the translation of the Quran is the difficulty to translate words meanings deeply without changing. Quran is one of the most influential books in the world today and the foundation text and inspiration for more than a billion people. It sets out the rituals, ethics, prayers and laws of Islam and is the word of supreme authority for the Muslim faith. But for many English language readers, reading the Quran in English can be difficult because some Arabic words do not translate easily into English or may have multiple meanings.

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

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

lack some sounds and letters from the other language. For example, there is no perfect match for " ع" in English and "P" in Arabic. This leads to ambiguities in the process of transliteration. Another problem associated with Arabic is the omission of diacritics and vowels (fatha, damma, kasra, shaddah, sukuun) in almost all the Arabic writings. Diacritics are also considered to be one of the main causes of ambiguity when dealing with Arabic proper nouns. So several translators used different techniques for transliteration; placing a macron (-) over the English alphabets to indicate long vowels of the Arabic language, placements of dots under certain English alphabets to indicate certain Arabic alphabets, which do not have an equivalent in the English language and underlining certain alphabet or combinations of alphabet to some more Arabic alphabet, which do not have an equivalent in the English language (Kashani, 2007).

Very few studies have been conducted about Islamic English expressions. So, the researcher is interested in studying the roles of this technique in solving the difficulties in translating the Nobel Quran and unification of Muslims.

1.1 Statement of the problem

There are several difficulties of translating the Qur'an for its audience. For many Quran's readers and Muslims, reading the Quran in English can be difficult because some Arabic words do not translate easily into English or may have multiple meanings, translating this sacred text for a contemporary English speaking reader was a massive, and the potency and splendor of the words and their meanings which are inextricably linked to the Arabic language are lost in English or any other language. This study aimed at investigating the role of Islamic English in solving the difficulties in translating the Holy Quran and unification of Muslims.

1.2 The questions of the study

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- What is the role of Islamic English in solving the difficulties in translating the Holy Quran?
- What is the role of Islamic English in unification of Muslims?

2. Related studies

Al-Zou'bi (1999) conducted a study to investigate the problems that translators of the Holy Quran encounter when translating animal names into English. Animal names in the Holy Quran are surveyed and listed in appendix together with three well known translations. Discussions are rated on names that are translated differently on the promise that absolute synonymy is untenable. Sixty four names, mentioned two hundred and ten times in the Holy Quran, have been covered in the present study. Definiteness is also highlighted. Ten names have been covered from a definiteness perspective. Translators of the Holy Quran fail to construe some names; therefore, some renditions have been preferred to others and some others have been suggested.

AbdulJaleel and Larkey (2003) presented a simple statistical technique to train English to Arabic transliteration model from pairs of names. It was called n-gram model because a two-stage training procedure first learns which n-gram segments should be added to the unigram inventory for the source language, and then a second stage learns the translation model over this inventory. This technique requires no heuristics or linguistic knowledge of either language. They evaluated the statistically-trained model and a simpler hand-crafted model on a test set of named entities from the Arabic AFP corpus and demonstrate that they performed better than two online translation sources. The researchers also explored the effectiveness of these systems on the TREC 2002 cross language IR task. They found that transliteration either of OOV named entities or of all OOV words was an effective approach for cross language IR.

Al-Fakhri (2005) conducted a study aimed at translating of the meaning of some verses in a cognitive semantic perspective that is concerned with the concept of interpretation. Thus, this study dealt with the difficulties encountered on the inferential meaning of the Glorious Quran, since there we have different levels of meaning. The translator usually achieves some of these meanings in all his work; i.e. it is impossible to achieve all the levels of meaning that the SL message may have especially the interpretative meaning (the subject matter of this study). Accordingly, it becomes necessary to establish such a rigorous method that the translator could follow during the translation of some highly stylistic rhetoric Arabic texts such as the Quranic texts. The interpretative model in translation is very crucial to the translator who is going to translate from Arabic into English the very stylistic, rhetoric and interpretative texts like the Glorious Quran. Thus, Languages have many levels of meaning; these levels should be present in the mind of the translators who are going to translate the highly stylistic and interpretative Arabic texts in to English. An establishment of fixed and clear translation model of interpretative meaning is a very significant issue that the present study aims to achieve.

Assaf (2005) carried out a study deals with translating the Arabic absolute object into English. The study aims at exploring a number of appropriate ways and means of translating the Arabic AO into idiomatic English. Examples of AO, categorized into three main groups on the basis of their functions, are cited from the Holy Quran. Three suitable translations carried out. Finally, alternative translations are provided by the researcher. It is concluded that the three translations sometimes repeat the root, which is often awkward, or lose the function of the AO in the target text. Besides, transferring all shades of the AO meaning is not an easy task, especially when the holy Quran is the source text. Translators have to pay attention to produce natural-sounding renditions by avoiding roots repetition and opting the idiomatic TL expressions.

Hassan and Sorensen (2005) introduced an integrated approach for named entity translation deploying phrase-based translation, word-based translation, and transliteration modules into a single framework. While Arabic based, the approach introduced here is a unified approach that can be applied to NE translation for any language pair. The results revealed that the system was composed of multiple translation modules that give flexibility for different named entities type's translation requirements so it gives a great flexibility that enables the system to handle NEs of any type.

Abed M. (2006) investigated syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of apposition of the Holy Quran. I t is also intended to find any similarities between the semantic and pragmatic functions of apposition in Arabic and English. To achieve this task, the researcher went through the Holy Quran and I'raab Al-Quran Al-Karim Wa Bayanuh twice. He collected 720 verses containing apposition structures based on the fact that the two constituents of apposition share the same case marker and the semantic relations between them are equivalence (whole for whole), part-for-whole, inclusion or deferential. Analysis of those verses showed that there are ten different structural combinations between the two constituents of apposition. Appositives have all possible combinations of definiteness, number and gender except that of duality and plurality. With regard to the semantic relations between appositives, there are three types of apposition in the Holy Quran, namely, whole-for-whole, part-for-whole and inclusion. However, deferential appositions are not found in the Holy Quran. Concerning the pragmatic function of apposition, the researcher could find 11 pragmatic functions that give more details about the main pragmatic function of apposition which is elaboration.

Kashani M. (2007) carried out a study that proposed a novel spelling-based method for the automatic transliteration of named entities from Arabic to English which exploits various types of letter –based alignments. The approach consisted three phases. The experiments showed that a transliteration method can help significantly in the situation where the test data is rich with previously unseen named entities.

The previous studies aimed at translating the meaning of some specific areas like nouns and apposition by using several methods. The present study aimed at translating the Holy Quran by using Islamic English. Also, it investigated the role of Islamic English in unification of Muslims.

3. Methods and procedures

3.1 Subjects of the study

The target population of the study was the university instructors in Jordan in the second semester of the academic year 2011. The study sample included 20 university instructors who specialized in translation in several Jordanian universities in particular who train their students to translate Islamic texts according to the rules of Islamic English.

3.2 Instrument of the study

For the purpose of the study, the questionnaire has been used and designed by the researcher. The translators were given a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) surveying their responses toward the use of Islamic Expression technique for solving the difficulties in translating noble Quran and unification of Muslims. There were 20 statements in the questionnaire focusing on two benefits: the first 13 items focusing on difficulties in translating noble Quran, and the items (14-20) focusing on unification of Muslims. All of 20 statements were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", the middle point being neutral.

3.3 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was content validated by a panel of experts. Criticism and comments on the original draft of the questionnaire were solicited from a number of experts from Jordanian universities (public and private university). Each reviewer commented on the suitability, sensitivity, exhaustiveness and accuracy of the item. On the basis of the jury's feedback, modifications were made. Statements were deleted and others were added and mistakes were corrected.

3.4 Procedures of the study

The researcher implemented the following procedures in conducting his study during the second semester of the academic year 2011:

- Reviewing the related literature was conducted.

- Designing the questionnaire.

- Establishing the validity of the questionnaire.

- Holding a meeting with the participating instructors to clarify the purpose of the study and giving the questionnaire to them.

- Analyzing statistically the obtained data so as to reach conclusions and suggest pedagogical implication and possible recommendations.

3.5 Statistical treatment

Means and standard deviations were computed to compare means of the group on the dependent variables of the study.

4. Results of the study

4.1 Results related to the first question of the study

The first question is: what is the role of Islamic English in solving the difficulties in translating? To answer this question, Means Scores and Standard Deviations of difficulties in translating Holly Quran were computed as shown in Table 2. Also, the following measurement was adopted to clarify the level of the statement:

Table 1. Scale of statement levels

Strong	**Medium**	**Weak**
Above 4	3-4	Beneath 3

Table 2. Means Scores and Standard Deviations of the Participants Responses on difficulties in translating the Holy Quran

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage	Degree	Grade
1.	Using Islamic Words has helped me to translate the literal meaning as closely and faithfully as possible.	4.2	0.512989	84%	Strong	5
2.	Islamic Words will be useful to translate concepts that are absent in non-Islamic cultures.	4	0.725476	80%	Strong	7
3.	Islamic Words help me to translate names of Allah that represent various attributes.	4.35	0.988087	87%	Strong	2
4.	It is easy for me to translate synonymous words that have more than one semantic component.	3.95	0.944513	79%	Medium	8
5.	When I use Islamic Words, I don't write many words to convey the same message.	3.95	0.887041	79%	Medium	8
6.	I can translate Arabic proverbs by Islamic Words strategy	4.15	0.74516	83%	Strong	6
7.	I can translate important Islamic expression by Islamic Words strategy	4	0.858395	80%	Strong	7
8.	Islamic English is a good way to translate Holly Quran without changing the order of words.	4.25	0.910465	85%	Strong	4
9.	By using transliteration, we may not loss Alliteration.	4.15	1.089423	83%	Strong	6
10	I can translate certain lexical items in Arabic having no equivalents in English.	4.2	1.005249	84%	Strong	5
11	Islamic English is a good modern way of translating rhetorical feature of metaphor.	4.35	0.875094	87%	Strong	2
12	By using transliteration, we may not loss Alliteration.	4.5	0.760886	90%	Strong	1
13	Islamic English is a useful technique to translate ambiguous words	4.3	0.894427	86%	Strong	3
	Difficulties in translating	4.180769	0.54978			83.61%

As can be seen from Table 2, the experimental group's mean score was higher (4.180769). As revealed in the Likert scaled questionnaire about instructors' views regarding the use of Islamic Words as a technique for translation Arabic into English, they rated the statement number (12): "By using transliteration, we may not loss

Alliteration." the highest. Then they gave fairly high ratings to the statements (11 and 13): "Islamic English is a good modern way of translating rhetorical feature of metaphor." , and "Islamic Words help me to translate names of Allah that represent various attributes." The instructors gave low ratings to the statements (4 and 5):" It is easy for me to translate synonymous words that have more than one semantic component " and "When I use Islamic Words, I don't write many words to convey the same message.".

4.2Results related to the second question of the study

The second question is: what is the role of Islamic English in unification of Muslims?

To answer this question, Means Scores and Standard Deviations of the role of Islamic English in unification of Muslims were computed as shown in Table 3. Also, the previous measurement was adopted to clarify the level of the statement (see table 1).

Table 3. Means Scores and Standard Deviations of the Participants Responses on the Role of Islamic English in

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage	Degree	Grade
14.	Islamic Words minimize the differences among cultures.	4.2	0.767772	84%	Strong	3
15.	Islamic Words help me to understand the Islamic culture.	4.45	0.825578	89%	Strong	1
16.	I shouldn't use Islamic English unless I have sound knowledge of Islam.	3.85	1.225819	77%	Medium	6
17	When I understand the Holy Quran, I can understand the principles of Islam and the cultures and political movements that are linked to it.	3.95	1.050063	79%	Medium	5
18.	Reading the Holy Quran by using the Islamic Expression contributes the unification of Muslims around the world.	4	1.076055	80%	Strong	4
19.	I believe in our Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) when he said: "Whoever reads a letter from the Book of Allah, he will have a reward. And that reward will be multiplied by ten". And he said as "... for the one who recites with difficulty, then he will have TWICE that reward.	4.25	0.850696	85%	Strong	2
20.	Using Islamic English encourages communication among Muslims.	4.2	0.801315	84%	Strong	3
	Unification of Muslims	4.128571	0.673098	82.57%		

unification of Muslims

As can be seen from Table 3, the experimental group's mean score on the role of Islamic English in unification of Muslims was also higher (4.128571). As revealed in the Likert scaled questionnaire about instructors' views regarding role of Islamic English in unification of Muslims, they rated the statement "Islamic Words help me to understand the Islamic culture" which is number (Q15) the highest. However, the students gave low ratings to statement number (16):" I shouldn't transliterate unless I have sound knowledge of Islam."

5. Discussion

5.1 Discussion of the results related to the questions of the study:

- The results related to question number one "what is the role of Islamic English in solving the difficulties in translating? Means Scores and Standard Deviations of the participants responses on difficulties in translating noble Quran were carried out. The mean score of difficulties showed significant difference (4.180769), so it is very high while comparing the number ($4.180769 \geq 4$). This means that there was a distinct positive influence of using Islamic English technique on solving the difficulties in translating noble Quran.

- The second result related to question number two "what is the role of Islamic English in unification of Muslims? Means Scores and Standard Deviations were carried out. The mean score showed significant difference (4.128571), so it is very high ($4.180769 \geq 4$). It means that there was a positive influence of using Islamic English technique on unification of Muslims. The finding of this study is expected because of the Features of Islamic English technique.

5.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of the current study came in line with theoretical and practical studies in the previous sections in which most of the studies provided evidence for the effectiveness of transliteration in solving the difficulties in translating the Holy Quran and unification of Muslims.

On the basis of the findings mentioned in the previous sub-section findings of the study, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

- The researcher recommends instructors in colleges to adopt of Islamic English technique in translating its effectiveness in solving the difficulties in translating.

- The researcher argues other researchers to apply same studies on non-native Arabic learners and from other cultures.

- The researcher suggests the use of Islamic English for translating in other subject areas (i.e. Haddaith)

- Finally, the fourth recommendation would be to use a larger student sample to increase generalization instead of using instructors.

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\multicolumn{7}{c}{**Appendix 1: Islamic English evaluation questionnaire**}
\multicolumn{7}{c}{Difficulties}

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Can't decide	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Using Islamic words has helped me to translate the literal meaning as closely and faithfully as possible.					
2	Islamic words will be useful to translate concepts that are absent in non-Islamic cultures.					
3	Islamic words help me to translate names of Allah that represent various attributes.					
4	It is easy for me to translate synonymous words that have more than one semantic component					
5	When I use Islamic words, I don't write many words to convey the same message.					
6	I can translate Arabic proverbs by Islamic Words strategy.					
7	I can translate important Islamic expression by Islamic Words strategy					
8	Islamic English is a good way to translate Holly Quran without changing the order of words.					
9	By using transliteration, we may not loss Alliteration.					
10	I can translate certain lexical items in Arabic having no equivalents in English.					
11	Islamic English is a good modern way of translating rhetorical feature of metaphor.					
12	By using transliteration, we may not loss Alliteration.					
13	It is a useful technique to translate ambiguous words.					

Unification						
No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Can't decide	disagree	Strongly disagree
14	Islamic words minimize the differences among cultures					
15	Islamic words help me to understand the Islamic culture					
16	I shouldn't transliterate unless I have sound knowledge of Islam.					
17	When I understand the Holy Quran, I can understand the principles of Islam and the cultures and political movements that are linked to it.					
18	Reading the Holy Quran by using the Islamic Expression contributes the unification of Muslims around the world.					
19	I believe in our Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) when he said: "Whoever reads a letter from the Book of Allah, he will have a reward. And that reward will be multiplied by ten". And he said as "... for the one who recites with difficulty, then he will have TWICE that reward."					
20	Using Islamic English encourages communication among Muslims.					