TRANSLATING CULTURAL BOUND LEXICONS OF THE HOLY QUR'AN: CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS
AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF SELECTED QUR'ANIC CULTURAL BOUND LEXICONS TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

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Abstract It is manifested that the basic requirement for rendering the meanings of the Holy Qur'an is result of the extensive and continued spread of the teachings of Islam in numerous languages in the world. Translating the meanings of the Holy Qur'an into other language is considered most significant job for transferring the divine message of the Holy Qur'an which is full of intuition, teaching and countless values and principles, to human beings faithfully and accurately. Translating the Qur'anic cultural lexicons into other languages especially into English is termed as more challenging and problematic task for translators due to cultural, structural, semantic and lexical variances between Arabic and English language. This study highlights the challenges and problems of translating Qur'anic cultural bound lexicons facing translators while translating process of the sensitive Qur'anic text which is full of various rhetoric devices. This study also explores some solutions of the challenges encountered during translating procedure by adopting various techniques and strategies. This study investigates to what extent English translatorsuccesses to overcome the translating the intended meanings of cultural bound lexicons for transferring the natural meanings and expressions of Holy Qur'an with naturalness, faithfulness and accuracy without occurrence of any type of distortion of meaning at any level. This study analysis some selected Qur'anic cultural bound lexicons translated into English by Pikhtall focusing on the adequacy and suitability of the solutions based on translating strategies and techniques for achieving accuracy, naturalness and

faithfulness in transferring the intended meanings of the Holy Qur'an to the readers of the target text. This study ends in presenting some findings and recommendations for finding out the adequate solutions to overcome the problems being faced during translating process of Qur'anic cultural bound lexicons.

Keywords: The Holy Qur'an, Translation, Cultural Bound Lexicons, Challenges and Solutions..

Introduction

Culture is mainly regarded as the style of life which includes habits, activities, traditions, beliefs, ideologies, approaches, values and objectives of a community. In the perspective of language culture is defined as the way of life and its expressions relevant to the people of a community who uses a specific language as their source of communication[1]. On the other hand, language is a part of culture as no one is able to understand the language of the people of a certain community without having extensive knowledge of their culture. It is evident that culture influences on language which results in causing some hurdles for translators while transferring the ideologies, thoughts, beliefs and values of the people of a specific community to another community. In the context of relationship between language and culture translation process is considered as a tool for cross cultural communication. Cultural lexicon means items and substances whose meanings in source text result in creating translation challenges and problematic situation during the process of transferring cultural specific meanings to a target text.

In fact, the problem of translating cultural bound lexicons results due to the lack of lexicons or their intercultural situation in the culture of the readers of the target text. Translating cultural bound lexicons is one the huge challenges for translators especially the translators of the religious text like the Holy Qur'an which contains sensitive text based on various rhetorical, semantic, cultural, and stylistic expressions. Distortion of the intended meanings of the Holy Qur'an is usually observed when translators are unable to find out the equivalents of the source text in the target text accurately and faithfully during translating process. So, in such situation the significance of adopting various techniques and strategies to overcome the huge challenge of translating cultural bound lexicons cannot be overlooked otherwise translating procedure results in occurring distortion and misinterpretation of the sensitive text of the Holy Qur'an. Due to it, translators are unable to transfer the intended meanings of the Holy Qur'an to the readers of the target text.

Relationship between Translation and Culture

It is undeniable fact that there is a strong relationship between culture and translation as culture is termed as a set of beliefs, ideologies, traditions and values of the people of a specific community, and translation which is defined by Eugene Nida as producing the closest natural equivalent of the

source language in terms of meaning and style[2], plays a vital role in communicating and transferring ideologies, thoughts and values of the people of a certain community to the people belonging to another community. Translation helps people to understand one another in terms of their values, culture, ideologies and customs. It also contributes in bridging the cultural gaps among the people belonging to different societies by removing the cultural differences that are mainly present in different communities. Finally, it is concluded that translation plays a major role for understanding the cultures and translating it into the respective culture.

Furthermore, globalization and development of approaches to translation is playing an important to strengthen the relationship between translation and culture. On this, many scholars have redefined the concept of translation as Al Qurashi indicates that translation is considered a significant element that plays a vital role in transferring values, customs and knowledge among various cultures, andHermans suggested that translation should be accepted as a cultural activity [3].and Gerding-Sales believes that the basic aim of translation is to help as cross cultural bilingual communication tool among people from different cultural background[4] , He further said commenting on translators in the context of cultural communication that translators are able to play vital role as cross-cultural transferors of culture from one culture to another by making their efforts in translating various ideologies and values in different cultures faithfully and accurately.[5]

So on this, it is perceived that the importance of translation in culture, and relationship between translation and culture cannot be disregarded at any level keeping in view that culture reflects the customs and values of the people, and translation play its essential role in helping people to understand the customs and ideologies of the people from different cultural backgrounds. It is quite obvious from the above mentioned points that culture and translation are linked with each other and go hand to hand and translation is extremely influenced by cultural differences which affect the accuracy and naturalness of the source text produced by a writer from a certain cultural background.

The knowledge and understanding of various cultures makes translator to overcome the problems encountered due to cultural elements of the source text and enables him to find out the equivalent expressions for producing target text fortransferring the intended message of the readers of the target text. It is concluded that there is inseparable link between translation and culture as culture influences translation in general and translation of certain cultural bound expression in particular due to the differences and variances in the source and target language which causes creating problems and challenges for a translator while translating process. To conclude it is said that translation play an important role in transferring cultural values, ethics , ideologies and

habits from one community to another community. The importance of translation in the context of culture cannot be unnoticed by any one.

Views of Scholars on the Cultural Bound Lexicons

Cultural bound lexicons have been discussed by various scholars as these lexicons are always focused during translation procedure to maintain the accuracy and naturalness required for achieving the quality of translation where intended meanings of the source text is transferred appropriately to the reader of the target text. Below are some views of scholars:

Nemark's View:

Newmark used cultural word instead of cultural bound lexicon as he mentioned that cultural word means a word in a specific language which contains cultural values and expressions which do not present or differ from other languages. He added that it is possible that the cultural values will change during translating a cultural word which carries cultural values. [6]

Baker's View:

Mona Baker mentioned another term for explaining cultural words as she used culture -specific concept instead of cultural word. It is possible that the source language carries a cultural based concept that is completely unfamiliar and unidentified in the target language. Such concepts are regarded as culture-specific concepts. [7]

Simatupang's View:

Simatupang explained that cultural word as a word which replicates the cultural forms and features possessed by the speaker of one language which is is unidentified or unfamiliar with the speaker of another language. [8]

To conclude, it is established by going through the above mentioned concepts discussed by various scholars, that various terms for cultural bound lexicons were used by various scholars as Newmark termed them as cultural word, and Mona Baker used culture-specific concept indicating that some time a concept carries specific cultural based values or ideologies in a language but these are not existing in other languages. Simatupagn also used the cultural word explaining that it means a word which replicates the cultural patterns and norms in a certain language but these are not present in other languages.

However, no matter what are the names used for cultural bound lexicons, it is clear that the translation of all types of cultural bound expressions, words and lexicons is a big challenge for translators during translation process. This challenge can be copied by adopting various translation techniques and strategies mentioned by various scholars in the field of translation studies. But at the same time it must be noted here that it is almost not easy to transfer cultural meaning into other languages due to the dissimilarity of cultures.

Challenges for Translating Cultural Bound Lexicons& Solutions

There are many reasons behind challenges and problems for translating cultural bound lexicons. Many scholars have highlighted some serious

challenges and problems encountered by translators while translating procedure of a text based on cultural bound elements through adopting various techniques and strategies.

Moreover, Nida indicates that differences and variances between cultures is the main reason behind the challenges and problems for the translators. [9] But at the same time he mentioned that some time problems happen even in the case of some similar linguistic and cultural features among various cultures as well. It is known here that translation problems may differ and fluctuate due to the level of cultural differences and gaps between source language and target languages.[10]

All type of problems encountered due to the presence of variances among the languages at all levels, may be reduced or solved by bridging the gaps and differences at cultural levels in both source text and target text by adopting various techniques and strategies explored by many scholars like Nemark, Hariyanto and Harvey etc. Newmark suggested many translation procedures and strategies includingnaturalization, cultural equivalent, shift, and modulation etc.[11]Hariyanto mentioned some strategies like addition, cultural equivalent, descriptive, reduction, transference, and combination.[12] However, Harvey mentioned translations strategies like equivalence, formal transcription and descriptive. [13]

To sum up,it is clear that there are many translation strategies introduced with different titles produced by many scholars. All strategies, techniques and procedures enable translators to cope the huge challenges and problems encountered during translating process for cultural bound lexicons and expressions. It is worth noting that these strategies play vital role to reduce difference based on cultural elements for seeking appropriate solutions through finding out equivalents for both source and target language. Sometime, using only one strategy is enough for solving the problems encountered due to cultural bound expression. But some time translator has to adopt more than one strategy for seeking solution for such type of problem as it depends upon the level of difference among source and target language.

For translating Qur'anic cultural bound lexicons,anytranslation strategy and technique may be adopted for achieving basic purpose for transferring the divine intended message of the Holy Qur'an keeping in view the difference and variances at structural, lexical, rhetorical level between Arabic and other target languages. Some translators adopt only one strategy for achieving the basic purpose related to naturalness and accuracy which is required for maintaining the quality and standard for translating the sensitive text of the Holy Quran. On the other hand, some translators have to adopt more than one strategy for seeking the equivalents in target language so that they may convey the intended meanings of the source text to the readers of the target text.

Analytical Study of selected cultural bound lexicons of the Holy Qur'an

Examples 1

ٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱلْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَٰهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ١٤

Pickthall, s Translation:
Who believe in the unseen, and establish **worship**. [15]

Analysis:
Pondering over the translation of the above mentioned translation of the Quanic verse focusing on the word (الصلاة) i.e.'As-Salaat, it is observed that the translation of this word was rendered by Pickthall as "Prayer". In fact the word (الصلاة) is one of the Quranic cultural bound lexicons which refers to five prescribed prayers mentioned in the Holy Quran, and the Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him) has taught us the specific way for offering five prayers with some certain feature like standing, bowing down and siting in a certain way while reciting some verses from the Holy Qur'an. The translator used the word "worship" for (الصلاة), and the English word "Worship" carries very general meaning of worship which may include zakat, fasting and Hajj etc. It means that the word "worship" does not contain the specific meaning mentioned by the Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him). In fact, the strategy of Generalization was used during the procedure of translating the cultural bound lexicon used in the Islamic culture but the intended meaning of the word (الصلاة) was not transferred accurately and faithfully to the reader of the target text of English language. For solving the problem encountered due to the cultural difference in Arabic and English language, a translation strategy mentioned by many scholars with different titles for instance "Illustration" mentioned by Mona Baker, Explicitation mentioned byVinay&Darbelnet,foreignization mentioned by Venuti, Borrowing,Translitration and addition mentioned by other scholars,may be adopted for transferring the intended cultural meanings to the readers of the target English language.

Example 2

وَلَا تُبَٰشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنتُمْ عَٰكِفُونَ فِي ٱلْمَسَٰجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ ٱللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ١٦

Pickthall, s Translation:
And touch them not, but be at your **devotions** in the mosques.These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus Allah expoundeth His revelation to mankind that they may ward off (evil). [17]

Analysis:
Thinking over the translation of the word (عاكفونَ) i.e. AAakifoona rendered by Pickthall, it is observed that the translator rendered the word (عاكِفُونَ) as "Devotions" which does not fulfill the purpose of transferring the meaning of the cultural bound lexicon used in Islamic culture for a specific worship which can be performed during the month of Ramadan or in any other month. It is pertinent to mention in this context as well that (اعتكاف)i.e. Eetikaaf is

performed by adopting some rules mentioned in Hadiths and many books of Islamic jurisprudence. The translator made his efforts to convey the meanings of this cultural bound lexicon by adopting the translation strategy termed by Venuti as "Domestication" i.e. selecting a word used in English culture at domestic level, but could not succeed due to the presence of cultural difference between Arabic and English language as a specific meaning of "Eetikaaf" does not exist in English culture but it is present in Islamic culture. This problem encountered due the cultural variances in English and Arabic language, can be solved by adopting the strategy of "Foreignization" or "Transliteration" or "Illustration" or "Explicitation for transferring the intended meanings of the word (عاكِفُونَ) in its Islamic cultural sense to the readers of the English target language which does not carries the intended meaning of cultural bound lexicon of the Holy Qur'an.

Example 3

<div dir="rtl">رَّبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ١٨</div>

Pickthall, s Translation:

Our Lord! Make us twain submissive unto Thee and of our progeny community submissive unto Thee, and show us **our rites**, and relent toward us! Verily Thou! Thou art the Relentant, the Merciful![19]

Analysis:

It is observed in the above mentioned English translation carried out by Pickthall that the translation of the word (مَنَاسِكَنَا) i.e. Manasikanaa which is plural word of (مناسك) in the source language, was carried out as "Our Rites". The word (مناسك) refers to rituals which are performed by Muslims during the month of Hajj i.e. pilgrimage in Makkah. Efforts were made by the translators to communicate the intended meanings of the word (مناسك) which is considered as Qur'anic cultural lexicon to the reader of the target language by adopting the translation strategy "Domestication" by using generalization procedure but he did not succeed to convey the intended meanings of this lexicon that contains the Islamic cultural bound expression. So, it is appropriate that the translation strategy named "Explicitation" or "Illustration" may be used to solve the challenge of translating the cultural bound lexicon to communicate the intended meaning of the Holy Qur'an to the target reader.

Example 4

<div dir="rtl">يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ٢٠</div>

Pickthall, s Translation:

O ye who believe! Prescribed unto you is **fasting** even as it was prescribed unto those before you, that haply ye may fear God.[21]

Analysis:

Focusing on the translation of the word (الصِّيَامُ) i.e. Siaam as "Fasting" by Pikthall. The word (الصِّيَامُ) is purely Qur'anic cultural bound lexicon which

requires extensive care during translating process as it carries the specific meaning in Islamic culture which has been mentioned by Islamic jurists by indicating that the (الصِّيَامُ)means in Islamic culture isrefraining from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse from pre-dawntime until sunset[22]. The translator adopted the translation strategy termed "Domestication" by Vinuti for transmitting the intended meaning of this Qur'anic cultural lexicon to the English readers but he failed to do that due to the non-availability of such type of Qur'aniccultural expression in the English target language as fasting in Islamic culture is totally differentfrom fasting exercised in Christianity.

Findings and Recommendations

1. It is observed that culture is termed by various scholars indicating that it is a set of beliefs, ideologies, thoughts, traditions, customs and approaches of the people of a certain community.

2. It is identified that there is a strong link between language and culture as language as a tool of communication, plays a vital role in transferring the culture of a certain community to others.

3. It is recognized that translating religious text in general and the text of the Holy Qur'an is a problematic job which cannot be carried out without extensive knowledge of various fields.

4. It is also perceived that translating the cultural bound lexicons of the Holy Qur'an is a huge challenge beings faced by translators due the existence of variance between Arabic language and other languages.

5. It is known that the basic reason behind the problem facing translators during translating cultural bound lexicons in to English language is the presence of variances between English and Arabic language which is full of deep rooted characteristics, features and styles based on numerous syntactical, lexical, semantic, rhetorical and stylistic expressions.

6. Sensitivity and thoughtfulness of the text of Holy Qur'an results in creating big challenge for translators who intend to transfer the meanings of the Holy Qur'an faithfully and accuracy keeping in view that the text of the Holy Qur'an is highly sensitive in terms of its complex rhetorical, syntactical, semantic and cultural styles, features and characteristics.

7. It is clarified that some techniques and strategies may be adopted for finding out an adequate and accurate solution for the challenges of translating the cultural bound lexicons during translation procedure.

8. It is indispensible that translators should have advanced knowledge in various fields including Shariah Sciences and contemporary sciences keeping in view that the Holy Qur'an is one of the most significant books that contains unique features and characteristics in its content based on all types of complex linguistic and cultural features.

9. Translators are required to be vary carful and accurate during translating the sensitive text especially cultural bound lexicons because any type of misinterpretation may results in creating distortion which creates hurdles intransferring the intended meanings of the Holy Qur'an.

10. For overcoming the problems of translating the cultural bound lexicons of the Holy Qur'an, it is recommend that various translation techniques and proceduresshould be adopted for transferring the intended meanings of the Holy Qur'anto the target readers by maintaining the naturalness, faithfulness and accuracy during translation procedure.

11. It is recommended that sometime combined two or more techniques and strategies like transliteration, borrowing, foreignizatin and localization etc. may be adopted by translators to produce adequate and accurate translation of the cultural bound lexicons in the HolyQur'an for achieving the purpose of transferring the intended meanings of the Holy Qur'an to the target readers.

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