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# Loss and Gain in Translation Procedure With Reference to Translation of the Meanings of the Holy Qur'ān

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## Abstract

It is crystal clear that the translation is considered a procedure of comprehending instead of multifaceted grammatical interaction and communication. The translation of the meaning of the Holy Qur'ān is challenging task for translators and linguists because it is not easy to comprehend the intended meanings of the Holy Qur'ān due to its text which contains the highest degree of eloquence and articulateness. A translator finds a multiplicity and diversity of potential rendering during translating process of the Quranic text due to its link to the linguistic system and cultural context. Loss and gain in translation is very common, diverse and unavoidable and escapable loss. Losses happen at all language levels including stylistic, syntactic and morphological level. On the other hand gain is not only occasional but also not always possible and achievable. Achieving some gain in target text during translation procedure is a problematic task for a translator as he has to adopt various translation procedures and strategies like annotation, explication, compensation and domestication. However, it is indispensable for a translator to maintain balance and equilibrium towards loss and gain in the translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān. The present study is an attempt to investigate losses and gains occur during the translating process of the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān by analyzing some selected Quranic verses translated into English. It also highlights viewpoints of various scholars on the concept of loss and gain in translation by indicating to translating procedures like transference, naturalness, synonymy, transposition, modulation and compensation etc. This research ends in some findings and recommendations.

**Keywords:** Loss, Gain, Translation Procedure, the Holy Qur'ān.

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It is undeniable fact that translation is an effective tool of communication as it plays a dynamic role in removing the barriers between any two languages. It is necessary for a translator to have full expertise and understanding of both Source and Target language for achieving effective and useful message being communicated between any two diverse language cyphers. It is crystal clear that the absence of communication causes challenges in conveying the anticipated meaning of the source text to the reader of target text. So, unavoidable losses may happen in communication of the message of source text to a reader of target text. The Important incentive for interpreting the meanings of the Holy Qur'an is that several Muslims are unaware of Arabic language, so the requirement for scholars to translate the meanings of the Holy Quran is to transfer its divine message to Muslims in the world. So, translating the text of the Holy Qur'an, poses a lot of difficulties and challenges for translators.

## **1. Concept of Loss and Gain in Translation**

### **Nida's View**

He mentioned that loss is connected to lack of dynamic equivalence which is established on the norm of equal result. This principle states that the link among the target receivers and the message they get should focus on being the same as that among the original receivers and the source language message. If the target text fails to support such relationship, the translation is accompanied by loss.<sup>(1)</sup>

### **Nozizwe & Ncube's View**

Nozizwe & Ncube stated that gain in translation means the enhancement or explanation of the source text which allows target text to be elastic and functional. It also supports languages to familiarize themselves to their utterers.<sup>(2)</sup>

### **Vinay & Darbelnet's View**

Vinay & Darbelnet mentioned that Gain support us to consider that a translator has ability to create TT that is more appropriate from the ST by producing it more perfect and understandable for the readers of target text.<sup>(3)</sup>

### **Sholikin's View**

Sholikin mentioned that loss occurs at word and phrase level. On the other hand Gain is achieved at word and phrase level as well. The loss is attained to create the TT appropriate for comprehension and understanding.<sup>(4)</sup>

### **Popovič's View**

Popovič said that loss in translation is the outcome of stylistic translational equivalence not being attained.<sup>(5)</sup>

### **Hervey and Higgins's View**

Hervey and Higgins mentioned that translation loss is basically failure of a translator to reproduce the source text accurately to convey the message of source text to a reader of target text. <sup>(6)</sup>

### **Disdar's View:**

Dizdar mentioned loss as the imperfect replication of the ST in TT <sup>(7)</sup>. O'Neil, D's stated that gain is conceivable because the liveliness of language. <sup>(8)</sup>

### **Bassnett's View**

She mentioned that gain is achieved for the improvement or explanation of the language of ST text during the procedure of rendering of any text into another language <sup>(9)</sup>.

To sum up it is revealed that various scholars has discussed the concept of loss and gain in translation as both loss and gain is an unavoidable element during the translation procedure. Sometime a translator faces losses during translation procedure and at the same time he achieves gains by adopting various procedures like modulation, transposition etc. It is also observed that loss in translation occurs when a translator fails to reproduce the source text in target text perfectly, and gain is conceivable because of the vitality of any language.

## **2. Causes of Occurring Loss in Translation**

Alwazna mentioned that there are various causes of occurring loss in translation such as linguistic and extra linguistic variances between two different languages because each language has its methods of expressing and uttering. Another cause of occurring loss is cultural and religious differences between two different languages. <sup>(10)</sup>

It is proved from the above mentioned opinion expressed by Alwazna that there are many causes behind occurring losses in translation including linguistic and extra linguistic variations between two different languages. Sometime cultural elements are involved in occurring losses in translation as a translator fails to achieve equivalence in cultural bound references and religious terms and due to this an appropriate message of the source text is not conveyed to the reader of the target text accurately and effectively.

## **3. Kinds of Loss**

There are two kinds of losses:

**1. Inevitable Loss:** It is unavoidable loss which usually happens due to the different systems of two different languages. The translating skills and capability of a translator may play an important role in achieving the equivalence between two different languages by adopting various strategies.

**2. Avertable Loss:** Such type of loss is avoidable that happens in the case of failure of a translator to achieve a suitable equivalence between source text and target text. It can occur at any level including linguistic and cultural level.

It is proved that there are two basic type of loss in translation which occurs during rendering any type of text from one language to another language. Some losses in translation which cannot be avoidable by a translator especially when a text based on cultural or extra linguistic variations is being translated. On the other hand, some time losses occur in translation which can be avoided easily by adopting various translation procedure and strategies mentioned by translation scholars and linguists. It is worth noting that some time losses can be avoided due the expertise, skills of translation and cultural knowledge of a translator who intends to communicate the message of source text to a reader of target text. It is also perceived that various translation strategies and procedure should be adopted by a translator to avoid losses in translation, especially during the translation of the text based on cultural bound references and religious elements.

#### **4. Translation Procedure**

The concept of translation procedure has been discussed by many scholars including Nida, Newmark and Chesterman. Below are the views of some scholars:

##### **Nida's View**

He mentioned that translating procedures consists of two types. One of them is known as technical procedure and other one is identified as organizational procedure. Technical procedure means to analyzing both source text and target text and making judgments of approximations at various levels including semantic and syntactic level. <sup>(11)</sup> In the organizational procedure an attempt is made to find out the communicative effectiveness of the intended message to the readers of the target text. <sup>(12)</sup>

##### **Newmark's View**

He has mentioned that translation method is linked with whole text and translation procedure is used for sentences and various units of language <sup>(13)</sup>. He also revealed various procedures of translation for achieving equivalence between source text and target text including transference, naturalization, cultural equivalence, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, and componential analysis. He mentioned some other procedures of translation like synonymy, through translation, shifts, modulation, recognized translation, compensation, paraphrase, couplets and notes as well. <sup>(14)</sup>

### **Chesterman's View**

He divided translation strategies into three subsets: Syntactic Strategies including literal translation, loan, transposition, and unit shift etc., Semantic Strategies such as synonymy, hyponymy and converses etc. and Pragmatic Strategies like cultural filtering, explicitness change, coherence change and interpersonal change.<sup>(15)</sup>

It is witnessed that according to Newark's view there is difference between the procedure of translation and method of translation as translation method is linked with the translation relating to the whole text, and translation procedure is used and adopted to translate sentence and their small units. It is also perceived from the above mentioned viewpoints of the scholars of translation studies that there are various procedures and methods being adopted by translators to achieve the appropriate equivalence between the source text and target text by focusing on accuracy and effectiveness of the communication of the intended meanings of the source text to the reader of the target text. For instance Nida has mentioned two type of translation procedure like technical procedure which is to analyze both source text and target by focusing on achieving approximations at semantic and syntactic level, and organization procedure is making an attempt to achieve the communicative effectiveness and accuracy of the intended meanings and messages to the readers of the target text. Furthermore, it is also witnessed that different scholars have mentioned different translation procedures under different titles which may help a translator to achieve equivalence between source text and target to some extent, but it may be said that the main purpose of all translation procedures is to establish an appropriate effectiveness of communication of the intended meanings of the target text to a reader of the source text effectively and accurately.

### **5. Losses in Translation of the Meanings of the Holy Qur'ān**

The translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān is challenging task keeping in view that rendering is the procedure of comprehending and understanding rather than a difficult grammatical communication. In addition to that a translator of the holy text of the Holy Qur'ān finds a multiplicity of possible translations because it is difficult to understand the anticipated meanings of the Holy Text because as it has link with linguistic system and the cultural context. According to Steiner's view quoted by Long who mentions that reinstating the contextual element is considered a problematic matter for a translator during translation procedure.<sup>(16)</sup> Anthony Pym mentioned that sacred text is one of the unbelievable texts for translation especially in the case of the presence of translation styles in more than one historic period.<sup>(17)</sup> According to

the Hussein Abdul Raof, s point of view that it is not possible to produce the Holy Qur'an in an equal style to the original keeping in view its structural and mystical effect on a reader of the Holy Text. He also mentioned that incorrectness and twisting of highly complex and sensitive Qur'anic data is usually produced by a translator who is not competent in translating skills and lacking religious background. <sup>(18)</sup>

To conclude that Losses occur during the translation procedure of the meanings of the Holy Quran at different levels including grammatical losses, lexical losses and semantic losses. Some examples are as under in this regard.

### Example 1

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ. <sup>(19)</sup>

And We created you, then fashioned you, then told the angels: Fall ye prostrate before Adam! And they fell prostrate, all save Iblis, who was not of those who make prostration. <sup>(20)</sup>

### Analysis

Pondering over the above mentioned Quranic verse it is observed that it discusses a great divine act of the creation of the human being. Here emphasis is required due to the word “لقد”. The emphasis with the word (لقد) is to attract the attention of human being to the reward that Allah Almighty conferred His human being is, creating them. Though, such loss was not compensated during the translation procedure. However omitting the emphasizing word like (لقد) mentioned in the above verse affects the transferring process of the meaning to a reader of the divine text accurately. Thus, the esthetic form and style of the verse is not transferred during translation process which causes occurring partial loss of meaning. It is worth noting that stress “Attawkid” (التأكيد) is a feature of Arabic language, which happens due to the use of reappearance, substitutes or certain words among others.

### Example 2

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءِئِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنِ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَائِكَةً أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَّا خَالِدِينَ. <sup>(21)</sup>

Then began Satan to whisper suggestions to them, bringing openly before their minds all their shame that was hidden from them (before): he said: "Your Lord only forbade you this tree, lest ye should become angels or such beings as live forever." <sup>(22)</sup>

### Analysis

It is observed in the above mentioned Quranic verse that the conjunctive (و) in the Quranic context of (وقال) was not translated by Abdullah Yusuf

Ali. The translator tried to compensate it by using the colon i.e. (:), that is considered “Intra-System Shift” according to Catford or “Translation by omission” according to Mona Baker which has no effect on the intended meaning. Moreover, it upsets accuracy to the source text and due to it the intended meaning of ST is not transmitted to reader of the TT effectively and clearly.

### Example 3

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ. (23)

God said, ‘Get down from here! This’ is no place for your arrogance. Get out! You are contemptible! (24)

### Analysis

The translation of (فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا) was rendered by Abdel Halim as “This is no place for your arrogance”. We see that the verb (تتكبر) in the source text was not rendered into an equivalent target text verb but converted into a noun “Arrogance” that does not fulfill the purpose of the verb clearly. In addition to that, the word “Place” was added by the translator during translation process as well. This linguistic loss in rendering the ST verb disturbs the meaning of the source text to some extent. Furthermore, it affects the faithfulness which is the basic element of the translation to convey the message of the source text to a reader of the target text effectively.

### Example 4

وَقَالَ مَا تَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَائِكَةً أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ. (25)

He said: "Your Lord only forbade you this tree, lest ye should become angels or such beings as live forever." (26)

### Analysis

The translation of the dual pronoun (كُما) was rendered as “you” in plural. Likewise, the word (ملكين) is dual and translated into plural “Angels” in the Target Text. Due to this, partial semantic loss occurred because Arabic language structure is different from English structure as Arabic language has duality in diverse structural forms and the intended meaning of duality was not transmitted to the reader of the target text. Such type of structural loss in the rendition of duality can be condensed or avoided by using compensation approach of translation mentioned by various scholars in the field of translation studies. In the context of this verse the grammatical loss can be reduced by adding the words “Adam and Eve” in bracket while translation process.

### Example 5

وَنَادَاهُمَا اللَّهُ أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنِ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ. (27)



And their Lord called unto them: "Did I not forbid you that tree, and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?" <sup>(28)</sup>

### Analysis

It is perceived that the Quranic clause (إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ) is in the present form but it was rendered by Abdullah Yusuf Ali in past tense as "Satan was an avowed enemy unto you" which resulted in loss in tense. Due to this it the intended meaning of the holy text was not transmitted to the reader of the target text accurately and faithfully because devil is not an enemy only for Adam and Eve only, but for it is also for all their descendants.

To sum up, it is found that different types of grammatical losses occur during translation procedure like loss in the translation of tense, duality and conjunction etc. It is also observed that some losses in translation can be averted by adopting different translation strategies mentioned by various scholars in the field of Translation Studies including shift by addition or footnote as per the requirement of the context of the source text and target text especially when a translator faces problems in translating cultural bound expressions of a sacred book like the Holy Quran.

### Example 6

وَأَذِّنْ لِكُمْ نَجَاتِكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ. <sup>(29)</sup>

And remember, we delivered you from the people of Pharaoh: They set you hard tasks and punishments, slaughtered your sons and let your women-folk live; therein was a tremendous trial from your Lord. <sup>(30)</sup>

### Analysis

Looking into the above mentioned verse it is seen that the word (يذبحون) is derivative verb in the exaggerated form which indicates to the sense of plentifully doing the action of slaughtering Jews' sons by Pharaoh's followers. It was rendered as "slaughtered" by Abdullah Yusuf as a past tense verb which caused a linguistic gap and it influenced the intended meaning of the Quranic text to the reader of the target text. So this grammatical gap can be filled by adopting translation strategy titled "Shift by Addition" by Catford a prominent figure in the field of translation studies as the word of "Abundantly" can be added during the translation of this verse to convey the intended message of the source text faithfully and accurately.

### Findings and Recommendations

1. It is observed that loss in translation occurs due to the lack of dynamic and active equivalence required to be achieved during translation

procedure by a translator through adopting various procedures and strategies of translation.

2. On the other hand gain in translation is achieved during clarifying the source text for transferring the intended meanings of the source text to a reader of target text.

3. Gain in translation enables various languages and especially the target text to be flexible, useable and understandable in terms of intended meanings of the source text in various cultural and social circles in the human society.

4. It is proved that gain in translation make us to assume that a translator has ability to produce target text that is more understandable for a reader by making it more clearer and effective keeping in view that the effective communication and accuracy is very much needed to be achieved by a translator during translation process.

5. The loss usually occurs because of making the target text more acceptable, readable and understandable for a reader of target text. The gain in translation is to deliver the whole messages of source text to a reader of target text effectively and accurately.

6. There are two types of loss i.e. inevitable loss and avertable loss. Inevitable loss means a loss which cannot be avoidable during translation process due to some differences of both source and target languages at linguistic and cultural level. Avertable loss means a loss which can be avoidable by adopting various procedures and strategies mentioned by various scholars and linguists. It is worth noting that both types of losses can be seen at all levels including stylistic, cultural and linguistic level.

7. There are various causes of occurring loss in translation including linguistic differences and extra linguistic differences like cultural and religious variances, between the SL and TL.

8. Losses occur during the translation procedure of the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān at different levels including grammatical losses, lexical losses and semantic losses.

9. It is discovered that losses occur in translation at linguistic level with a linguistic order based on duality, tense, and verbs. Some of these losses are avoidable which could be reduced by adopting various translation procedures and strategies mentioned by various scholars.

10. The translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān is challenging task keeping in view that rendering is the procedure of comprehending and understanding instead of multifaceted grammatical interaction.

11. The translator of the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān finds a multiplicity of possible translations because that it is difficult to comprehend the intended meanings of the Holy text due to its link with linguistic system and the cultural context.

12. It is recommended that comprehensive research should be carried out by focusing on determining the appropriate procedures and strategies for translating the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān, and extensive efforts must be made to reduce and avoid losses during the translation process of the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān.

14. It is also recommended that a translator should enhance his knowledge in general and knowledge on all concerned disciplines to understand the Holy Quran particularly so that he may able to achieve appropriate gain to achieve the intended meanings of the Holy Qur'ān and at the same time he should avoid losses during translation procedures by adopting various translation procedures and strategies.

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