



The Translation of the Holy Quran

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ABSTRACT

The translation of the Holy Quran is an interpretation of the Quranic meanings into languages other than Arabic so that it can be understood and its meanings comprehended. The Quran has been translated into most of the world's languages, including European, Asian, African, and Persian. The translation of the Quran has gone through several stages until it stabilized. As for its ruling, there is a difference of opinion among scholars, but the prevailing view is that the translation of the Quran is desirable so that the Quranic message can reach the entire world and this religion can be conveyed to the farthest corners of the earth. It is also considered one of the collective obligations (fard kifaya) that the Muslim community must undertake, as it is a means of conveying the religion to all of humanity. The topic of translation is a very important and sensitive one. After reviewing some reliable sources and references due to its great significance, it has become apparent that the enemies of Islam seek to exploit the translation and interpretation of the Quran's meanings to distort, misinterpret, and conceal the truth. Therefore, we have presented translation, its types, its challenges, the principles upon which it is based, and the opinions and views of scholars from all Islamic schools of thought.

Keywords:

Translation, Quran

First Requirement

The Research Significance

The translation of the Holy Quran is a highly important and sensitive science. Scholars have categorized translation into both positive and negative dimensions, which we will explain later. It is permissible and impermissible, depending on its type. It is one of the sciences that requires the translator to be extremely cautious and vigilant, due to its impact on

changing rulings from permissible to impermissible and vice versa. Therefore, it is one of the sensitive sciences, which must necessarily be paid full attention, so that enemies of Islam and religion do not exploit translation as a loophole to distort the texts according to their desires and whims. (Al-Saghir, 1999).

The positive aspect is to convey the religion to all nations, languages, and dialects to

invite them to Islam through translating the meanings of the Quran. Allah Almighty says, addressing all the worlds: "تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ (بlessed be He Who sent down the criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this Qur'ân) to His slave (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) that he may be a warner to the 'Âlamîn (mankind and jinn) (Al-Furqan 25:1).

Definition of Translation:

This word 'translation' in Arabic conveys several meanings, including the interpretation of speech in a language other than its own; that is, to translate or to interpret, meaning to explain someone's speech in another language. (Al-Badr, n.d)

Second Requirement

Orientalists and Translation: Their Classification

Orientalists have made significant efforts and paid special attention to translating the meanings of the Holy Quran into major world languages. They studied the Quran and Islamic religion to understand the greatness of this religion and its holy text through the translation of its meanings, exploring its miracles, eloquence, and rhetoric, as well as analyzing the character of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The first translation of the Quran's meanings into Latin was carried out in Europe between 1141 and 1143 AD with the assistance of two Arabs, at the request of Father Petrus.

Orientalists have classified translation into two categories:

1. Full Translation: This involves translating the meanings of the entire Quran from beginning to end. The first full translation into Italian was undertaken by the orientalist (Irvine) in 1530 AD.
2. Partial Translation: This involves translating certain chapters or surahs of the Quran into various languages. Among them was the Danish orientalist (Bull), who had a broad and comprehensive view of Islam.

Third Requirement: Types of Translation According to Muslim Scholars

1. Literal Translation

2. Interpretative Translation (also known as Meaning-Based Translation) (Al-Rumi, 1983)

1. Scholars' Opinions Regarding Literal Translation:

Definition of literal translation: The transfer of speech from one language to another with all its components (Abbas, 1997) and stylistic and linguistic characteristics, including all the advantages of that language and the conditions of conjunctions, adjectives, and structure, etc.

Al-Zarkashi defined it as: "Translating by preserving the meaning of the original text and substituting words from another language while altering the arrangement and structure according to the rules of the target language." (Al-Badr, n.d)

Conditions for Literal Translation:

- a. There must be equivalent vocabulary in the target language that matches the vocabulary in the source language, allowing the translator to replace each term in the translation with its counterpart from the original.
- b. The languages must have similarities in hidden pronouns and connectors that link words together, as well as alignment in the grammatical roles of words such as subject, object, and adjectives. (Al-Rumi, 1983)

Among these conditions is the impossibility of translating a text with a literal translation, let alone translating the Quran, because it is impossible to find equivalent verses in another language. Since it is impossible and unattainable to translate the Quran with a literal translation due to the problems it causes and the alteration of the Quran's rhetorical and miraculous nature, this type of translation is unanimously forbidden by Muslim scholars.

Issues with Literal Translation:

One of the challenges is that the Quran is the speech of Allah, the Almighty, revealed to His noble Messenger (PBUH), miraculous in its words and meanings, and its recitation is an act of worship. No one can say that a word from the Quran, when translated, can be considered the speech of Allah, for Allah has only spoken in the Arabic language in which it was revealed. Therefore, translation diminishes the

miraculous meaning of the Quran, because the miracle is specific to what was revealed in the Arabic language. What is worshiped through its recitation is that clear Arabic Quran with its words, letters, and the arrangement of its words. A literal translation of the Quran, regardless of the translator's knowledge of languages, styles, and structures, would result in something other than the Quran. (Al-Qattan, n.d). Another problem with literal translation is that it is limited and connected to the language and culture of the translator. As for language and what is related to it, languages are not equal in terms of singular, plural, gender, and grammatical structures.

This means that it is impossible to transfer the characteristics of one language to another. The Arabic language is rich in vocabulary, metaphors, beautiful words, and unique attributes that do not exist in other languages. As for the translator's personality, their trust, and their fairness in conveying the translation, people differ in their cultures, emotions, thoughts, and intellectual and religious beliefs. This is a very important issue for the translator, as it is difficult for a translator to completely detach themselves from their own thoughts, emotions, environment, and inherited habits. (Abass, 1997)

Another significant issue with literal translation is that the Quran is the miracle with which Allah challenged the Arabs, an eternal sign, and the miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Quran's divine style, unparalleled eloquence, sophisticated structure, rhetorical devices, beauty, sweetness, metaphors, and concise legislation are all unique features that cannot be fully translated into any other language. These stylistic elements are intrinsic to the Arabic language and its linguistic characteristics, making literal translation impossible. The consensus among Muslim scholars is that a literal translation does not qualify as the Quran, with the exception of Abu Hanifa, who initially permitted it but later retracted his opinion.

For example, the verse from Surah Al-Imran (3:175) says: **إِنَّمَا ذَٰلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ ۗ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا مِنِّي إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ** "It is

only Shaitân (Satan) that suggests to you the fear of his Auliyâ' [supporters and friends (polytheists, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh and in His Messenger, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم)]; so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers. Translating this literally would misrepresent the intended meaning. The literal translation might suggest that Satan frightens his allies, implying that the allies fear Satan, whereas the intended meaning is that Satan uses his allies to instill fear. This is clarified in the same verse where Allah instructs, "فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا مِنِّي إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ" "so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers."

Moreover, literal translation allows for adversaries of Islam and the religion who may distort meanings according to their own agendas and desires to undermine Islam and its teachings. (Abass, 1997)

2. Interpretative (Meaning-Based) Translation:

Interpretative translation involves explaining and clarifying the meaning of text in another language without adhering to the original structure or order of the words. In other words, it involves conveying the meaning of the text in a different language without being constrained by the original word order or syntax. Islamic scholars interpret the Quran with the goal of delivering the most accurate and accessible meaning. When such interpretations are translated faithfully and carefully, this process is known as "interpretative translation of the meanings of the Quran." Most scholars of the Ummah agree that translating the meanings and explanations of Quranic verses is permissible, provided that the translation helps people from different languages and dialects understand the Islamic faith. However, it is essential that the Quran itself is recited and prayed in its original language, Arabic, as this preserves the integrity and authenticity of the text. Understanding and explaining the meanings and interpretations of Quranic verses through translation is permissible and not problematic. The permissibility of translating the meanings of the Quran is supported by the verse:

158. قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ۗ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ "Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allâh - to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Lâ ilâha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). It is He Who gives life and causes death. So believe in Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e. Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), who believes in Allâh and His Words [(this Qur'ân), the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and also Allâh's Word: "Be!" - and he was, i.e. 'Îsâ (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary), and follow him so that you may be guided." (Surah Al-A'raf 7:158).

This verse emphasizes the importance of conveying the Islamic message to everyone so that the religion of Islam reaches all people. However, there are important guidelines to follow:

1. The Arabic text of the Quran should be written, following the script of the Mushaf, at the top of each page of the translation.
2. The interpretation of the meanings of the Quran should be written in the target language.
3. Quranic words should not be written in non-Arabic scripts, as this has been declared impermissible by Islamic scholars.
4. The translation should be limited to the direct meanings of the interpretations, avoiding the inclusion of scientific, philosophical, or speculative terminology.
5. The translator must be trustworthy, just, and knowledgeable in Islamic teachings to preserve the noble and significant meanings of the Quran. (Al-Rumi, 1983)

The Ruling on Meaning-Based (Interpretative) Translation and Literal Translation, and Scholars' Opinions.

Scholars differ on the permissibility of translation into two main positions: those who support it and those who oppose it. (Al-Rumi,

1983). Here are some arguments from supporters of meaning-based (interpretative) translation:

1. Islamic law is a universal invitation for all people, not restricted to any particular group, nation, or ethnicity. Therefore, it is essential to explain the Quran and clarify its meanings in languages that people understand. This ensures that the teachings of the Quran reach all communities.
2. Just as Arabs need explanations of the Quran's meanings and rulings, non-Arabic speakers also need translations of the Quran's meanings and interpretations. Thus, meaning-based (interpretative) translation of the Quran is permissible as long as it does not contradict the textual sources. This view is supported by the majority of scholars.

One of the opinions that support the Meaning-Based (Interpretative) Translation is that Al-Zarkashi and the majority of scholars agree that literal translation of the Quran is not permissible. However, translating the meanings and interpretations of the Quran is acceptable and beneficial, as it facilitates understanding for people of different languages and clarifies the Quran's meanings to a wider audience. (Al-Badr, n.d). Among the evidence presented by those who support interpretive (or meaning-based) translation is the ruling that such translation is permissible. (Al-Qattan, n.d) When scholars of the nation interpret and explain the meanings of the Quran and translate them accurately and skillfully into another language, it is permissible because Allah the Almighty sent His Prophet (PBUH) as a bearer of good tidings and a warner to all people regardless of their languages, races, and colors. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said "The Prophet was sent to his own people specifically, but I have been sent to all of humanity." As for the ruling on a literal, word-for-word translation of the Quran, it is considered impermissible according to Mana' al-Qattan and the majority of scholars.

The Hanafi scholars, however, have permitted both literal and meaning-based translations. They agree with the majority of scholars on the permissibility of meaning-based

translation but differ on literal translation. Additionally, the Hanafis allow for prayer to be performed in languages other than Arabic. (Al-Qattan, n.d)

Some opponents argue that any form of translation, whether literal or interpretative, is not permissible. They claim that literal translation fails to convey the Quran's linguistic style and characteristics, and that meaning-based translation might introduce errors due to the translator's potential misinterpretation. (Rida, 1947). These opponents are seen as extreme and restrictive, closing off non-Arabic speakers from understanding the Quran except through learning Arabic. Some proponents advocate for both literal and meaning-based translations and even permit performing prayers and deriving legal rulings from translations. (Maraghi, n.d). This perspective aligns with the views of Abu Hanifa. However, it is noted that Abu Hanifa later retracted this opinion, as mentioned in the works of Al-Zarkashi and discussions by Al-Qattan on Quranic sciences.

Fifth Requirement: A Summary of Scholars' Opinions on Translation

Scholars are divided into three main categories regarding the translation of the Quran:

1. **The Extremists of Rejection:** This group vehemently opposes both literal and interpretive translations of the Quran. (Rida, 1947)
2. **The Extremists of Acceptance:** This group excessively supports both literal and interpretive translations, with figures like Abu Hanifah even advocating for non-Arabic recitations during prayer. (Maraghi, n.d)
3. **The Moderate Group:** This group represents a middle ground, arguing that while literal, word-for-word translations are not permissible, interpretive translations aimed at explaining the meanings of the Quran are acceptable. This is the view held by the majority of scholars. Abu Hanifah held a dissenting opinion.

Our Preference: After carefully considering the arguments and evidence presented by scholars, we lean towards the moderate viewpoint. This

stance is more beneficial as it allows for the dissemination of Islam to people of all languages and cultures. By providing interpretive translations, we can help people understand the greatness of this religion, its Quran, and its Prophet, guiding them away from idolatry, existential beliefs, and misguided ideologies. This approach makes it easier for people to embrace Islam without the burden of learning Arabic, except for the recitation of the Quran itself.

Sixth Requirement: Writing the Quran in Non-Arabic Scripts

Definition: This refers to the practice of writing Quranic verses using non-Arabic scripts, such as Latin letters. For example,

(قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنِّي أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۚ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) "Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "I don't tell you that with me are the treasures of Allâh, nor (that) I know the Unseen; nor I tell you that I am an angel. I but follow what is revealed to me." Say: "Are the blind and the one who sees equal? Will you not then take thought?" (Surah Al-An'am 6:50)

The verse would be transliterated into Latin script as follows:

Qul - laa a'quulu lakum 'indii khazaa'inu-l-laahi walaa a'lamul-ghayb wa laa a'quulu lakum innii malak. 'In 'attabi'u 'illaa maaa yoohaa 'ilayy. Qul hal yasta-wi-l-'a'maa wal-basiir? 'Afa-laa tatafakkaruun?

There are two main opinions on this matter:

The first opinion is that it is forbidden to write the Quran in any language other than Arabic. Al-Suyuti presented this view, and Muhammad Rashid Rida also held this opinion. The majority of Muslim scholars agree that writing the Quran in a language other than Arabic is prohibited. (Abass, 1997)

The second opinion is that it is permissible to write the Quran in a language other than Arabic. Some contemporary scholars have adopted this view, including:

- a. **Abdul Aziz Fahmy Pasha**, son of Jahazi Amr, was born in 1287 AH. He studied at Al-Azhar and was a lawyer. He passed away in Cairo in 1370 AH.): He proposed to the Arabic Language

Academy in Cairo in 1941 that Arabic, including the Quran, be written using Latin letters.

- **b. Lubid al-Jamal:** In the 1970s, he advocated for writing the Quran in Latin letters. This is mentioned in the book "Writing the Quranic Text in Latin Letters" by Saleh al-Aud, pages 3 and 58. (Al-Aud, 1987).
- **c. A man in Guinea:** He wrote parts of the Quran in Latin letters, and his copies are on display in Parisian libraries.

Significant errors were found in these writings, highlighting concerns about tampering with the Quran and compromising its sanctity. (Al-Aud, 1987). Such practices undermine the miraculous nature and linguistic integrity of the Quran, contradicting the Quranic verse: "بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ" "In the plain Arabic language" (Surah Ash-Shu'ara 26:195).

The Preference of Al-Zarkashi on Writing the Quran in Non-Arabic Script

Al-Zarkashi has ruled that reciting the Quran in any language other than Arabic is impermissible. He emphasized that the Quran was revealed in Arabic, and thus, the language of its script should be preserved. According to him, the Arabic script is integral to the Quran, and any attempt to write it in a different script undermines its sanctity. This view aligns with the consensus of the majority of scholars who hold that the Quran should remain in its original Arabic form. The verse "إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ" "Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'ân in order that you may understand" (Surah Yusuf 12:2) reinforces this position.

The Seventh Point: Reciting Prayer in a Language Other Than Arabic (Al-Rumi, 1983) Scholars have divided on this issue into two main groups:

The first group permits reciting prayer in a language other than Arabic, either unconditionally or when one is unable to speak Arabic. This is the view of the Hanafi school, which is reported to have allowed reciting prayer in Persian as long as the meanings of the Arabic Quranic verses are conveyed. The argument is that reciting in a foreign language is

better than not reciting at all, as it still conveys some of the Quranic message.

The second group, which includes the majority of Shia Imami, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali scholars, prohibits reciting the Quran in prayer, regardless of whether the person can speak Arabic or not. They argue that a translation of the Quran is not the Quran itself. Since Arabic is the language of the Quran, they believe that Arabic must be used in prayer, the call to prayer, and the opening of prayer. They also stipulate that Arabic must be used in contracts. (Al-Wa'li, 2007). Shia Imami jurists and scholars emphasize that Arabic is the language of worship and contracts and that no other language can substitute for it.

Conclusion:

Upon studying the issue of translating the Quran, we have concluded that literal translations, writing the Quran in Latin script, and reciting it in Latin, foreign, or Persian languages are impermissible and prohibited, except according to the views of a few scholars. This is due to several reasons, including:

1. Deviation from the Arabic language that the Quran was revealed in.
2. The loss of the linguistic, legislative, and scientific miracles of the Qur'anic text.
3. The Quran's beauty, eloquence, and profound meanings would be diminished when recited in a language other than Arabic.
4. Vulnerability to Distortion: Translations could lead to misinterpretations, alterations, and falsifications of the Quran's message.
5. It loses all the properties, coherence, and consistency of the verses of the Qur'an. The Noble Qur'an is interconnected and free from flaws, gaps, errors, and deficiencies. It is inconceivable that the words of Allah Almighty could be tampered with by those who seek to distort or corrupt them."
6. One of the most important points is that there is no language in the world that can fully translate the Qur'an in all its vocabulary, style, expressions, and miraculous aspects from Arabic into any

other language. This is an impossible and unattainable task."

7. It allows for the enemies of religion and Islam to criticize and distort Islam. However, the interpretation of the meanings and explanations of the Qur'anic verses, or what is called 'interpretative translation' (meaning-based interpretation), is an accepted practice among the scholars of the Islamic community. This is because it clarifies the meanings of the Qur'an only, within specific rules and conditions.
8. Moreover, it has positive aspects, as it aims to convey the teachings of Islam to all languages and dialects around the world. This helps people recognize the greatness and beauty of this religion, its noble Prophet (peace be upon him), and to become acquainted with the Noble Qur'an.

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