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# An Analytical Study in The Arabic-English Translation of Al-Tin Surah

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Abstract: The religious translation is one of the important types of translation. The translation of it is not easy. It has a number of difficulties that the translator may face during translation. This leads him/her to use a number of strategies that enable him/ her to translate the religious texts efficiently.

This research comprises three sections. Section one presents definitions of translation. Section two deals with the analytical levels of translation (lexical, syntactic, semantic, phonological and stylistic levels). Section three investigates such levels in the translation of Surah Al-Tin I and analyse their implications in translation. Finally, the conclusions have been drawn.

Keywords: translation - Arabic language - English language - the Holy Qur'an.

# دراسة تحليلية في الترجمة العربية - الإنكليزية لسورة (التين)

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المستخلص: الترجمة الدينية هي إحدى المواضيع المهمة في الترجمة، فترجمتها ليست سهلة، فقد يواجه المترجم عدة مشاكل أثناء ترجمته، وتلك المشاكل تقوده أو تقودها لاستخدام عدة طرق تمكنه من ترجمة النصوص الدينية باحتراف. ويتضمن البحث ثلاثة أقسام، يستعرض القسم الأول تعاريف الترجمة ويتعامل القسم الثاني مع المستويات التحليلية للترجمة (المستوى المعجمي، المستوى التركيبي، المستوى الدلالي، المستوى الصوتي، المستوى الأسلوبي) ويكشف القسم الثالث عن تلك المستويات في الترجمة العربية الإنكليزية لسورة (التين) بتحليل مضامينها في الترجمة، وأخيراً استخلصت النتائج من الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة – اللغة العربية – اللغة الإنكليزية – القرآن الكريم.

# Problem:

According to studies and research studied it seems that the most important challenges faced by the interpreters and translators of the sacred and religious texts, especially the Holy Quran, is the search for finding the equivalent of religious terms, especially the surah Al-Tin.In other words, the translator and interpreter face some problems at the semantic and word levels, the study makes some recommendations to find the suitable equivalents in other languages.

# Aims:

This research aims at investigating the Arabic-English translation of Al-Tin Surah and analyzing their implications in translation. More specifically, the research attempts to:

1- Provide a better understanding of religious difference between SL and TL.

- 2- Make the translators aware of the existence of problems in the religious translation that stem from the exact dissidence between Arabic and English societies to improve the capabilities of dealing with them efficiently.
- 3- Seek strategies that help the translators to solve problems.

#### Significance:

The significance of the research lies primarily in the fact that this research is beneficial for the translators, since it provides them with a better understanding of the religious translation which helps the translator to deal with them efficiently.

## Limits:

The research is limited to finding out the Arabic-English equivalants of the Surah Al-Tin.The research deals with a uni-directional religious translation: from Arabic into English.

# 1- Translation:

#### 1-1-Definition:

Translation is believed to be a complicated process. It involves the replacement of a text in a given language into its equivalent in another language. In this respect Newmark (1982: 7)defines translation as " a craft which attempts to replace a written message or a statement in one language by the same message in another language", that is, replacing a text in one language by another text in another language (Aziz&Lataiwish, 2000: 4). This definition implies two languages, which is translation proper in which the process of translation is practised between two languages (Ibid). Therfore, translation is an operation "that is performed in languages in which the SL text is replaced by the TL text on the basis of equivalence between both texts" (Ilyas, 1989: 19). It is the action of interpretation of the meaning of a text, and subsequent production of an equivalent text. It communicates the same language in another language (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2007: 16).

In the religious translation, some writers define such a translation as follows:

Nida (1986, 21) says: "it is often figurative". It makes use of many symbols, metaphors, metonymies and employs extensively poetic form (Ahmed, 2002: 162).Nida (1997: 186) says:

"the lack of intelligibility in some religious texts because such as texts seems to communicate something of the mystery of faith and of intimate spiritual relations with Gods."Thus, translators have to follow two steps during their translation (Ibid): Firstly, the translation must be historically accurate. Secondly, the translation must be faithfully representing the meaning of the SL precisely.

## 2- Transaltion Analysis

In order to systematically study the problems that the translator may face, the present research is to group the difficulties into five categories, each one represents a different level. The levels discussed here are lexical, syntactic, semantic, phonological and stylistic levels.

#### 2-1-The lexical level:

On the lexical level, problems related to the translation of individual lexical items are discussed. The lexeme is " the minimal distinctive unit in the semantic unit in the semantic system of a language (DLP <sup>1\*</sup>, 1997, s.v.lexeme), that is, the smallest meaningful unit by which a sentence is constructed. It is a set of units which are listed in dictionaries as separate entries (Ibid).The translator, therefore, should look first for the equivalent of these lexical items in the TL <sup>\*</sup> the problems encountered in this level vary from addition, omission and replacement.

#### 2-1-1-Addition

Addition provides additional specification regarding a particular person, thing and process, etc. which is being referred to (Dickins, n.d: 11). It tends to be inevitable in the translation process. It adds some words which are absent in the SL<sup>\*</sup> texts as an attempt to convey the SL meaning. For example:

And Mentioned in the book (Qur'an), Maryam ← سورة مريم) (Maryam (سورة مريم) (Maryam Surah). (Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 595).

Here, the added word **Qur'an** is added to to the TL text as an attempt to recognize the holy book "**Qur'an**.".

#### 2-1-2-Omission:

Baker (1992: 40) indicates"if the meaning conveyed by a particular word or expression is not valid enough to the development of the text and distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translator can omit words or expression during translation", that is, words are reduced into the TL text into lesser words than those in the SL text, for instance:

#### القارعة ← Al-Qari'ah

## ما القارعة → What is the striking

(سورة القارعة) (Al-Qari'ah Surah)

Here, the word Al-Qari'ah (the striking hour: the day of Resurrection)is mentioned at first, then it is omitted (the striking).

<sup>\* -</sup>Dictionary of Language and Phonetics (1997)London: Blackwall Publishers Ltd.

<sup>\* -</sup>TL: Target language

<sup>\*</sup> SL: Source language

#### 2-1-3-Replacement

Replacement involves replacing the SL term with a TL word that is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader as found in the SL text (Ibid: 31).It carries roughly the same meaning and exerts the same influence on the TL text in the priority of readers' comprehension (Ibid).In other words, the SL lexical items are replaced by TL equivalents on the basis of relationship to the same situational substance (Ilyas, 1989: 23).

(Al-Nasr Surah)(سورة النصر) Where comes the Help of Allah → اذا جاء نصر والله) (Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 1216).

## 2-2-Syntactic level:

Problems related to the syntactic level are those rules which link the lexical items into a sentence which are as follows:

#### 2-2-1-Word order:

The order that words take within a sentence is called word order. Each language has its own way of sequencing and grouping words into sentences. The two languages (English and Arabic)have different word order. English, on the one hand, has the  $S^* - V^* - O^*$  order, whereas Arabic has a contradictory word order V-S-O (Dickins, n.d: 37), for instance:

SL: وما تفرق الذين اوتوا الكتاب). TL: And the people of the Scripture differed (S-V-O). (Al-Baiyyinah Surah)(سورة البينة) (Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 1205).

# 3-2-2-Passivization vs \*Activement

Activement, on the one hand, refers to " an agent involved in an action resulting in or affecting something" (Aziz, 1989: 263).Passivization, on the other hand, indicates"an action affecting or resulting in something" (Ibid: 264).

The passive voice transformation in English comprises three things: (1)Verb, (2)Subject and object (3)word order. The process of changing English active into passive sentences is a syntactic process including (O+Aux  $^{*}$ +Com  $^{*}$ ). In Arabic, the passive voice involves two steps (1)Verb and (2)Object. The

- \* -V: Verb
- \* -O: Object
- \* -VS: Versus
- \* -Aux: Auxiliary, helping verb

<sup>\* -</sup>S: Subject

process of changing active into passive voice is a morphological process having the form (فعل) for the perfect (past) and (يفعل) for the imperfect (present) (Ibid).

.(Ibid). کُسرَ-- کَسرَ (Ibid).

In translating the English passive sentences, we do not use the passive pattern, rather the active pattern (Al-Wasiti, et al, 1979: 40), for example:

The property that was left her by her husband  $\leftarrow$  العقار الذي ورثته عن زوجها rather than العقار الذى تركه لها زوجها (lbid).

## 2-2-3-Nominal vs verbal

Nominal clause like a noun phrase in the subordinate clause, i.e. they may function as subject, object of complement (Aziz, 1989: 223), for instance:

يقلقنى إن السيارة قديمة→ That the car is old upsets me

In translating this pattern, the nominal pattern of SL is changed into verbal clause in the TL. Here, the translator adopts the TL pattern (Ibid).

## 2-2-4-Verbal and verbless sentences

Verbal sentences, on the one hand, include subject, verb and object. Verbless sentences, on the other hand, refer to the ellipsis of the verb (Quirk, 1976: 350), For example:

A dozen of people were standard, many of them children → دزينة من الناس كانوا من طبقة راقية من الفالا

Though the verb to be (were)is omitted in the second clause, it is mentioned twice (کانوا) in the TL.

## 2-2-5-Tense

Tense is "a grammatical device used by a language to refer to time" (Aziz, 1989: 39).

It means the verb form or forms used to express certain time relations (Eckersley, 1985: 157).

The translator should be aware of the tense of SL sentences (Al-Wasiti, 1979: 96), for example:

In the past centuries, woman was economically productive at home.Nowadays, her domestic We have granted you Al-Kauthar → انا اعطيناك الكوثر (Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 1215).

Here, the tense of the first clause is past whereas the tense of the TL text is present perfect tense and Al-Kauthar is a river in Paradise.

<sup>\* -</sup>Com: Complement

#### 2-2-6-Gender:

Gender is "a device used by language to refer to one of the divisions of sex in the outside world" (Aziz, 1989: 119).English, on the one hand, has three genders (masculine, feminine and neuter which correspond to male personal pronoun (he), female personal pronoun (she) and nonpersonal or inanimate pronoun (it).Arabic, on the other hand, has two genders (masculine and feminine).The first is used for male creatures and formally unmarked nouns referring to inanimate things, for example, على the latter is used for female creatures and for normally marked nouns referring to inanimate things, for instance, فتاة (Ibid).Gender is relevant to nouns and pronouns, for instance:.

.(Ta-Ha Surah) (سورة طه) (And I have chosen you ← وانا اخترتك) (Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 610).

Examining the this Ayah, one can find that the inseparable pronoun (اخترتك) is translated into (you).

Moreover, English does not draw a number or gender distinction in the role of the addressee realized as you, whereas Arabic draws such distinctions أنتَ، أنتم، أنتما، أنتما، أكري (Aziz, 2000: 97).

## 2-2-7-Number:

At the number system, English differentiates between one (singular)and more than one (plural), for example, book-books, whereas Arabic distinguishes between one (singular), dual and plural, for instance, کتاب،کتابان کتب (Ibid).

I worship not that which you worship (Al-Kafirun Surah) سورة الكافرون. (Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 1216)

#### 2-3-Semantic level

On this level, problems related to the meaning of expressions are discussed. Collocation, idioms and proverbs are the subdivisions of this category.

#### 2-3-1-Collocation

collocation is "a coherent set of words relating to a particular topic or activity, especially in literary works giving unity to a text (Obeidat, 1998: 7), i.e. items occurring together in a sequence.

The major part of the cultural link between English and Arabic is the identification of many of their collocations with one another, for example:

In purifying pages → صحفاً مطہرة (Al-Baiyyinah Surah سورة البينة (Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 1205).

#### 2-3-2-Idiom

An idiom is "an expression whose meaning can not be inferred from the meanings of its parts" (Cruse, 1986: 37). The meaning of an idiom is not related to the meanings of individual words (Palmer, 1976: 74).Consequently, a literal translation of idioms is inexpressive and collocationally abnormal (Gleason, 1980: 417).Here, the translator should express their content paraphrasely, for example: Lord  $\leftarrow$  ...

#### 2-3-3-Proverbs:

Proverbs are also" idioms but they are mainly used to give a word of advice or of warning, or wise comment on a situation" (Seidle&Mcmoride, 1978: 241). They summarize what experience have taught people in the performance chores (Ibid). The SL proverbs may have no TL equivalent. In this regard, they must not be translated literally, rather paraphrasely, for instance:

إن مع العسر يسرا -> Along with very hardship is relief

إن مع العسر يسرا

(Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 1201). سورة الشرح (Al-Sharh Surah)

This has been repeated twice so as to reassure the Prophet (peace be upon him) that the bad times he was passing through at that time would not last forever, but were going to be replaced by good times in the near future (Islamic OnlineFoundation UK).

#### 2-4-Phonological level:

On this level, difficulties related to the differences between the phonology of both languages are investigated.Usually the proper nouns including names of persons, places, institutions and others pose certain problems when the phonological system of the languages involves in the process of translation are different from each other like those of Arabic and English (Aziz, 1989: 2), for example:

## و طور سينين ← By Mount Sinai

(سورة التينAl-Tin Surah)

(Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 1201).

Here, the translator does find a TL equivalent for the SL, so he/she transliterates it**"Sinai "**, is " a location in which the prophet of Islam, Moses is called by Allah to go to Pharaoh of Egypt for guidance and warning (Wikipediaencyclopedia.org).

## 2-5-Stylistic level:

This level includes simile, metaphor, metonymy, personification and pun.

#### 2-5-1-Simile:

Simile is "the comparison of two things using like and as" (TU<sup>\*</sup>, 2006: 1).In literary works, the translator needs to convey a thought or message of the writer.It is important that he/she understands how the poet and writer uses words before translating (Ibid), for example:

As if they were wild donkeys ← سورة المدثر) كانهم حمر مستنفرة Al-Muddaththir Surah) (Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 145).

Here, the translator replaces the term کانهم حمرة مستنفرة with the wild donkeys.

#### 2-5-2-Metaphor:

In translating metaphors, the translator should be aware of the metaphors which have close cultural correspondence in both languages which use the same image with a word or more added, omitted or changed (Ghazala, 2000: 2), for instance:

وتركنا بعضهم يومئذ يموج في بعض→ We shall leave them to surge like waves on another

(سورة الكهف Al-Khaf Surah)

(Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 529).

#### 2-5-3-Metonymy

The SL sometimes uses a part to convey a whole (TU, 1997: 3), for example, the phrase in uniform has two meanings:

- 1- Wearing the same clothes worn by a group of people
- 2- In the military (Ibid).

The translator should be aware of that.

## 2-5-4-Personification:

Personification refers to "inanimate things treated as human beings" (Oxford Advanced Reader's Dictionary, 1995, s.v.personification) This point is very important to the translator whose job is rendering the SL text accurately to the TL reader.

#### 2-5-5-Pun

In translating the SL text, one can realize a musing use of word that can have two meanings or different words that sound the same: *A major success* and other puns on *the Prime Minister's name* were in all the papers (Oxford Wordpower Dictionary, 2003.s.v.pun).

<sup>\* -</sup>Tu: Translation Unit (2006)"Simile".www.tnellen.com.

## 3-The Analytical Translation Levels in Surah Al-Tin

# بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم -1-3

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Examining the SL sentence, one can realize that any surah starts with the Arabic holy phrase بسم which is translated literally into *In the name of Allah* and here the name of our creator *Allah* is transliterated also replacing Arabic letter (الله) with the English one (<u>A</u>llah).

We begin with every name that belongs to Allah' because the word "Ism" (Name) is Mufrad Mudaf (singular, genitive) and therefore inclusive of all Names [Al-Asmaa Al-Husna].<sup>[</sup> The 'B' [ب] in Bismillah is a 'B' [ب] of Isti'anah (استعانة), which means 'seeking help'. So, we are empowering ourselves by seeking Allah's help before starting an action (Al-Sa'di, 2015: 1222).

The بسم الله Basmalah is used for three primary reasons (Ibid):

- الاخلاص Ikhlaas (Sincerity) the action is for His Sake alone.
- البركة Barakah-seeking His help/blessing for the action.
- القبول Qabool (Acceptance)-that Allah accepts and is pleased with our action.

Besides, الرحيم/which is translated into the *Most Gracious* and الرحيم/which is translated into the *Most Merciful* using the superlative particle *most*. Both are names of اسماء الله *the Holy Names of* Allah (Al-Baustany, 1986: 236).They have all merciful features of Our Creator Allah Who give to His Creatures (Baalabki, 2000: 580).

## والتين والزيتون-2-3

By the fig and the olive (Surah Al-Tin)

(Al-Hilal&Khan, 1996: 1201).

The above verse is the first line of <u>At-Tin</u> Surah. In this verse, Allah uses *waw al-qasim* (<u>j</u>), which is replaced by the preposition *by* to take oath in the Quran by using التين Al-Teen - The fig and الزيتون Az-Zaytoon - the olive (two useful fruits) (Lajnah Mutghsasah, 2016: 23) and their location which is prominently associated with the Prophethood of Jesus, that is, the Al-Aqsa Mosque Jerusalem in Palestine.So, These two fruits refer to location in which they are grow (Islam.stackexchange Site).Literal translation strategy is used here.

## وطور سنين -3-3

By Mount Sinai (Al-Tin Surah) (Ibid).

Here, the translator does not find a TL equivalent for the SL, so he/she transliterates it *Sinai* which is " a mountain in Egypt where the prophet of Islam, *Moses* is called by Allah to go to *Pharaoh* of Egypt for

guidance and warning (Wikipediaencyclopedia.org).Besides, the Arabic preposition (<u>9</u>), which is replaced by the preposition *by*.Two translation strategies are used here: Paraphrasing translation strategy and transliteration.

# وهذا البلد الأمين-4-3

By this city of Security (Makkah).

(Ibid).

This Peaceful City - this points out to the holy location *Holy Makkah (Al-Mukarramah)* in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where the <u>first revelation</u> to <u>Muhammad</u> in <u>Makkah</u> at Hira cave located at the <u>Mountain Jabal al-Nour</u>, that is, the Islamic prophet, <u>Muhammad</u> was visited by the archangel <u>Jibrīl</u>, who revealed to him the beginnings of what would later become the <u>Quran</u> and also **Prophet** Ibrahim when makes the du'a (prays) by saying <u>(Islam.stackexchange Site)</u>:

واذ قال ابراهيم رب اجعل هذا البيت امناً وارزق اهله ن الثمرات (سورة البقرة)

"And when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city (Mekkah) and provide its people with fruits" (Al-Bqarah Surah).Literal translation strategy is used here and city Makkah is added here to make the meaning of the SL clearer to the TL reader and the Arabic preposition (9) is replaced by the preposition *by* 

# لقد خلقنا الإنسان في أحسن تقويم-5-3

Verily, We created man in the best stature (mould)

(Ibid).

The personal pronoun *We* is used to refer to His ability to create His creatures in the best form.Here, the inseparable pronoun (خلق<u>ن</u>ا) is translated into (We (.In addition, the adverb *verily* is added here to make an assurance of His ability (DarAl-Fajer Al Aslammah, 2007: 579).

Paraphrasing translation strategy is used because the term الانسان is translated paraphrasely into *man*.

# ثم رددناه أسفل السافلين-6-3

Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low.

(Ibid)

After that, disbeliever (him) is gone to hellfire *Jahnanam*.The phrase اسفل السافلين which mean *hellfire* (Lajnah Metaghsash, 2016: 23)is translated literally.Moreover, the inseparable pronoun (ددناه) is translated into (him (and the Sound Masculine plural السافلين is translated into TL as *the low* (singular).

# إلا الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات فلهم أجر غير ممنون-7-3

Except those who believe in Islam and do rightest deeds. Then they shall have a reward without and (paradise). (1102)

The believers who make good deeds will enter into paradise as a reward for them. Grammatically, the sound Masculine plural is rendered into TL as infinitive and the inseparable pronoun (فليم) is translated into (they. (Paraphrasing translation strategy is used, since the phrase اجر غير ممنون translated paraphrasely into *without end*.

## فما يكذبك بعد بالدين -8-3

Then what causes you disbelievers to deny the recompense (The Day of Resurrection).

(Ibid)

The SL is also translated paraphrasely as an attempt to explain the meaning of the SL line referring to the Day of Resurrection or Day of Judgment Where peoples are judged whether they go to Paradise or Hellfire (Dar Al-Furqan, 2004: 579). Besides, one can find that the inseparable pronoun (يكذبك) is translated into (you).

# أليس الله بأحكم الحاكمين-9-3

Is not Allah the Best of Judges?

(Ibid)

Allah is the most just judges of all the Earth and Heaven. He is Our creator. Paraphrasing translation strategy is used here and the word judges is added here to manifest what the SL refers to (The best Judge is only Allah. Allah is transliterated and the Sound Masculine plural الحاكمين is rendered into TL as infinitive *judges*.In addition, the Arabic letter (إلله) is replaced with the English one (Allah).

At the end, this holy surah explains His great ability to create His creature whose some of them enter Paradise and others enter into Hellfire for their bad deeds and Allah threatens them by punishing them during Day of Judgement after the death of all His Creatures (DarAl-Fajer Al Aslammah, 2007: 579).

Strategies	Lexical				Syntactic				Semantic		Phonological		Stylistic							
	А	0	R	WO	PA	NV	VV	т	G	N	С	I	Р	F	WF	S	м	м	Ρ	Р
Literal	4		2						1	1	3				3					
Paraphrasing	1		3						3	2	1									
Transliteration	3																			
A: Addition P			A: Passivization —Activemnt					G: Gender I: Idior		I: Idiom	WF: Without									

## Analytical Levels and Strategies in The Arabic -Translation data of Al-Tin Surah

footnote

O: Omission	NV: Nominal-Verbal	N: Number	P: Proverb	S: Similie					
R: Replacement	VV: Verb and verbless	C: Collocation	F: Footnote	M: Metonomy					
WO: Word Order	T: Tense								
P: Pun	P: Personification								
This table has been done by the researcher									

# **Conclusions.**

As far as the data under investigation are concerned, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 1- The most prominent level is the lexical one, since The SL structure is exactly different from that of TL because equivalence, thus, cannot be achieved especially if we know that so far there has been no unanimous definition of the term. Therefore, what translators of the Quranic text are involved with is transferring meaning of the Quranic text. But meaning (content) is encapsulated in the Form which is distinctly and uniquely rhetorical in Quran. In other words, such an inextricable content-form relationship should make the process of transferring meaning not an easy one at all, especially as we know that the Quranic text is sacred and sensitive (Jaber, 2010: 943).
- 2- As far as all levels are concerned, each level has a category which is prominent. Addition and replacement are equal in the number of the collected data in the lexical level. Gender is the most prominent in the syntactic level, since gender is relevant to nouns and pronouns (القد خلقنا) we created). The Arabic collocation are rendered literally into TL (وهذا البلد الامين) By this city of security (Makkah). Transliteration without footnotes are more than these with footnotes in the phonological level, since all Allah is the name of our creator (God).
- 3- The strategies used in translating Al-Tin Surah as follows:
  - a. Literal strategy
  - b. Paraphrasing strategy
  - c. Borrowing
- 4- The most frequently used strategies in this respect are two ones: Literal translation and paraphrasing strategies, since both of them are equal in the number of the data in the lexical level.

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