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INVESTIGATING THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING NON-EQUIVALENT CULTURE-
SPECIFIC ASPECTS IN TWO CHAPTERS OF THE HOLY QURAN: COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at finding the strategies that the translators dealt with while translating seven culture-specific terms selected from two chapters (*Suras*) of the Holy Quran. To be more precise in finding out the more appropriate strategies while dealing with such aspects, three translations have been analyzed as far as these aspects are concerned. Identifying and analyzing the data collected, it has been detected that five different methods were pursued. Some of these methods were repeatedly used while others were used scarcely. The result of the study shows that translation by giving explanation was recurrently used more than any other strategy. Analytically, it has been inferred that the hidden intended meaning of the culture-specific terms can be appropriately conveyed by giving some clarification to the source text term so as to eliminate any obscurity. The other strategies can do well in conveying only partial indication of the source text.

Keywords: Investigating, Translating, Non-equivalence, Culture-specific concepts, Holy Quran

Introduction

Being one of the most controversial issues among translators, non-equivalence requires to be considered and a great attention should be paid to. Armstrong (2005, 44) states that

The notion of target language solutions to source language problems is always referred to as 'equivalence', suggesting that in extreme cases, where linguistic and cultural material are inextricably blended, translators need to seek a solution, probably situated on a different linguistic level compared with the source language, in order to produce an effect on the reader of the target text that should be as close as possible to that produced on the reader of the source text.

Translating culture-specific concepts is the focal point that will be discussed here since it is considered to be a problematic issue among those who try to find an appropriate strategy to deal with them well. (Mona Baker 1992, 21) points out that this type of non-equivalence emerges when "the source-language word expresses a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture".

Statement of the Problem

Translating non-equivalent religious and cultural elements is not actually an easy task because it is not mere finding their equivalents in the target language. There are many cultural problems which rise at the linguistic level. Among these, one essential issue is to find exact equivalents in English for those non-equivalent religious and cultural aspects. The strategies that are pursued by the translators (Mohammed Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, Hilālī and Khān) while dealing with the problem of translating these culture-specific aspects in *Sūrat Al-Baqarah* and *Sūrat Yūsuf* in the Holy Quran are basically the focal point of this study.

Aim of the Study

This study mainly aims at finding out the strategies that translators use while dealing with non-equivalent Quranic words and expressions when translating certain work from Arabic into English. In addition, the three translations will be evaluated in terms of their linguistic and referential accuracy and in terms of their intelligibility which will be based on a comparison between the translations and the original text and also by referring to the Quranic exegeses to find the degree of intelligibility and whether the translations match them or not.

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the problems that face translators while dealing with non-equivalent culture-specific aspects?
2. What types of strategies are adopted by the translators while dealing with translating some specific-culture words and expressions in *Sūrat Al-Baqarah* and *Yūsuf*?
3. What interpretations (exegesis) did the translators base their translations on while translating non-equivalent cultural elements in *Sūrat Al-Baqarah* and *Yūsuf*?
4. To what extent do these translations convey the intended message of the source text?
5. How should translators deal with these cultural aspects if they lack appropriate equivalent in the target language?

Significance of the Study

It is extremely significant here to refer that this study is not oriented to criticize particular translations but mainly to investigate to what extent these translations succeeded in finding a solution to the problem of translating culture-specific terms and to relate what is resulted to the translation methods used.

It is a well-known fact that culture is a huge problem of translation, yet cultural and religious terms and expressions can be translatable if appropriate strategies are used. This study is so important in the way that it will clarify some strategies and principles that will help in translating such non-equivalent aspects. Moreover, it will be a supporting source for translators who find it difficult or improbable to deal with non-equivalent cultural expressions.

The Relation between Translation and Culture

Cultural understanding during the process of translation is extremely essential especially in the translation of different Quranic terms and concepts as well as different literary texts in general, which require an effort on the part of the translator to retain the cultural information of the source text in the target text.

Translation is a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions (Venuti 2000, 200). According to this statement, translators regularly encounter the problem of how

to deal with cultural aspects implied in a source text (ST) and to find the most appropriate technique to successfully convey these aspects in the target language (TL). Puyu (2013, 23) confirms that linguistic and socio-cultural phenomena are two interrelated concepts in the process of translation. Cultural differences are not something that can be eliminated; however the attitude of cultural interference can be expected to be framed by reasonable and practical modes of thinking. Since translation is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but a socio-cultural phenomenon as well, which reveals the interaction between speech act and socio-cultural factors." According to this statement, transferring the meaning and the intended message of the text is the major aim that the translator is trying to attain. Semantic gap, which is posed by the cultural differences, can be defined as the cultural information contained in source language that has no equivalence in target language. The so-called 'cultural model' emerged as a reaction to earlier conceptions of translation set primarily to account for 'equivalence' in terms of grammatical and lexical categories as elements of the linguistic system. This was a time when both linguists and translators felt that the attitudes and values, and the experience and traditions of people, inevitably become involved in the indication of meaning carried by language. Glodjović (2010, 141) points out that cultural implications can be noticed in different forms ranging from lexical content and syntax to ideologies and ways of life in a given culture. The translator also has to decide on the importance given to certain cultural aspects and to what extent it is necessary or desirable to translate them into the target language (TL). Untranslatability, as assumed by some linguists, doesn't only emerge from linguistic limits, but also from cultural barriers within translation. Nida in the book edited by Venuti (2000, 130) clarified the serious problems that translators face to the linguistic and cultural differences between the source and the target languages. Where the linguistic and cultural gaps between source and receptor signs are least, it should be expected that the least number of serious problems can be encountered. Salehi (2012, 83) asserts that both language and culture can never be separated in the process of translation and that language is culturally embedded. It both expresses and shapes cultural reality, and the meanings of linguistic items, whether they are words or larger segments of text, and it can only be understood when both taken into consideration with the cultural context where these linguistic elements are used"

Methodology

In doing this research, three English translations of the Holy Quran are selected in order to compare and contrast them with the original Arabic text. The focus here is a descriptive study in which different religious and cultural aspects chosen from different Quranic texts. The three English translations of these texts, which were written by Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, Hilali and Khan will be investigated. The above mentioned translations were selected on the ground that the renderings by these three translators have been claimed by many to be more comprehensive, faithful, and literary than others, although translating the word of God bears inevitable loss.

The procedures which will be used to conduct the present study are as follows:

1. Studying the original text and locating the items under study (i.e. non-equivalent cultural-specific aspects).
2. Reading the translations and comparing the given translated items not only with one another, but also with the original text (ST).
3. Referring to different interpretations (*Tafsir*) of the Holy Quran and compare them with the translations of the above mentioned translators.
4. Determining the strategies applied by the English translators in rendering the cultural aspects of the source text.
5. Concluding from the data elicited in the above manner to determine the most frequently used strategies and to decide on the (un)translatability of the Quranic cultural terms and expressions based on the applied strategies.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to come with the strategies used by translators in conveying the appropriate meaning of the determined culture-specific terms, I checked different dictionaries and some Arabic exegesis of the Holy

Quran. Then the translation of the terms and the Quranic expressions under study will be compared to discover if there are any mismatches with the different exegeses. In addition, it attempts to find out to what extent the strategies used in translating such aspects were successful and appropriate. Dealing with the various types of non-equivalence needs more than one strategy. Baker (1992, 26-34) identified some of these strategies that will be taken into consideration when assessing the translations of the aspects we are concerned with in this study. These strategies are as follows:

1. Translation by a more general word (superordinate).
2. Translation by a less expressive word (more neutral).
3. Translation by cultural substitution.
4. Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation.
5. Translation by paraphrase

Culture-specific Concepts in the Quranic Context

Culture-specific aspects mean those elements which have no equivalents or different positions in target reader's cultural context, and, therefore, create difficulties in translating their meanings and functions in the source text into target text. This indicates that the source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. Kashgary (2011, 58) points out that religious terms are culture-specific par excellence. They represent a considerable category of translation non-equivalence since they cannot be precisely translated by providing their dictionary equivalents. For instance, the word *زَكَاةٌ* [*zakāt*], can be translated by using its one-word English equivalent "charity" or "alms", as many translators did in translating Quran. However, these equivalents do not provide the exact hidden meaning of the Arabic word as it is used by Muslims. *Zakat* can be more adequately translated by explaining and describing its conditions to approximate its full meaning through adding a qualifier "obligatory" or "ordained" to the English equivalent. The word *زَكَاةٌ*, for instance, can be explained as 'an obligatory amount of man's property that is given to poor and needy people.'

The Identification of the Culture-specific Concepts

According to Mona Baker, non-equivalence can be divided into some common types, culture-specific concepts is the type we are concerned with here which was defined according to Baker as the word in the source language that may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture."(1992, 21) The problematic issue of culture in the field of translation is connected with the problem of understanding the texts to be translated, because in many cases the translator and the reader are not necessarily members of the same culture. Without any cultural or factual pre-knowledge, the translator will not understand a piece of information, even if it is presented to him in the most logical way.

The underlined concepts in the following Quranic Arabic texts from *sūrat Al-Baqarah* and *sūrat Yūsuf* can be enrolled under the heading of being culture-specific concepts in a religious Quranic context:

.....

Source language text 1

وَجَاءُوا آبَاءَهُمْ عِشَاءَ يَبْكُونَ . [*Sūrat Yūsuf* (*Joseph*), *Āya* (verse) 16 Transliteration:
wa jā'ū abāhum 'ishā'an Yabkūn.

Translations:

- And they came weeping to their father in the evening. (M.P.)
- Then they came to their father in the early part of the night, weeping. (Y.A.)
- And they came to their father in the early part of the night weeping. (H&K)

In comparing the above three translations and finding the most appropriate one among them, it is very important to include what exists in the various Arabic-English dictionaries in addition to what Arabic Quranic interpreters say concerning the meaning of this Quranic term.

The word *عشاء* in the sixteenth *Āya* (verse) in *Sūrat Yūsuf* is related to the time of '*Isha*' (nightfall) praying which might be considered as a religion-specific term. Najīb (2006, 694) points out that the word *عشاء* refers to "the early part of the night, that is, commencement of darkness." In his clarification of the term, he explains it as "and they came to their father in the early part of the night, weeping." *Albaghawī and Al-Baghdādī* (1979, vol-2, 269) agreed in interpreting the term *عشاء* in this place. They both indicated that the term here refers to "the time of '*Isha*'" which clearly shows '*Isha*' (nightfall) praying time. *Assabūnī* (1997, 39) also states that the word '*Isha*' means 'the time of '*Isha*' at night'. At this time it will be dark and they may have the daring to tell the lies. Mas'ūd (1992, 551) specifies *عشاء* '*Isha*' as "the early dark part of the night that lasts from sunset *almaghrib* to the nightfall darkness."

According to the discussion above it can be inferred that *Yūsuf Ali* and *Hilālī & Khān* have appropriately captured and conveyed the meaning of the word *عشاء*. Their translations matched most of the exegeses of the Holy Quran. They also match what is stated in Arabic-English dictionaries and dictionaries of religious terms. The only translation of the three that did not, to a large extent, match any of the checked Quran interpretations was Mohammed Pickthall's. His translation of the word *عشاء* matched what *Ba'lbaki* stated in his dictionary *Al-Mawrid*. He translated it as "evening" which sounds ambiguous for the non-native to comprehend the appropriate meaning of the term. In looking up the word (evening) entry, Hornby states that it means "the part of the day between the afternoon and the time you go to bed." (2006, 16466). According to this statement, it can be inferred that Pickthall's translation of the word *عشاء* may confuse the non-native reader since he did not specify the period of time for the word *عشاء*.

The three translators here used different strategies in translating the term *عشاء*. Baker (1992) suggested some strategies that can be used by professional translators for dealing with various types of non-equivalence. In translating this term, *Yūsuf Ali* and *Hilālī* and *Khān* have adopted the paraphrase strategy to reach the desirable adequacy while Pickthall has preferred translating by a more general word. This strategy, as Baker (1992, 28) states, is used to overcome a relative lack of specificity in the target language compared to the source language. Therefore, the translation presented by Pickthall is to some extent less expressive than the original item. *Yūsuf Ali* as well as *Hilālī* and *Khān* might be more precise in their transferring of the term by using paraphrasing or explaining the meaning of the source language.

Source language text 2

[Sūrat Al-Baqarah, Āya (verse) 87] - وَأَتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيْدِنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ

Transliteration: Wa ātaynā ʾĪsā abna Maryam albayyināti wa ayyadnāhu birūh alqudusi.

Translations:

- We gave unto Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), and We supported him with the holy spirit. (M.P.)
- We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear (signs) and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. (Y.A.)
- We gave 'Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), clear (signs) and supported him with Ruh-ul-Qudus [Jibrael (Gabriel) عليه السلام]. (H&K)

Since the underlined expression above is a totally religious one, it can be identified as a culture-specific term. Religion, as stated by Newmark, is considered to be one of the cultural aspects, so the religious practices performed by different nations in different areas will, no doubt, be a part of the culture of that specific area. Newmark's view concerning religion and culture seems to be right since the availability of different religions entails the availability of different possible cultures. In his interpretation of this verse *Āya*, (Mawdudi 1988, 90) assures that "the 'spirit of holiness' signifies the knowledge derived through revelation." It also gives an indication to the angel Gabriel who brought this revelation. It also refers to the holy spirit of Jesus, the spirit

which God had endowed with angelic character. *Al-Baghdādi* (1979, 81) agreed with what *Qatāda* and *Al-Dahhāk* indicated in interpreting the expression روح القدس. They all assert that this expression signifies the angel Gabriel since he accompanied *Isa* and supported him with strength till they come to heaven. *Ibn Kathīr* also assures what *Al-Baghdādi* included in his exegeses. *Najīb* (2006, 489) illustrates that 'the holy spirit' to Muslims is but only Gabriel (PBUH).

On the basis of the discussion above, it can be figured out that *Hilālī* and *Khān* came to almost the appropriate meaning of روح القدس as *Ruh-ul-Qudus [Jibrael (Gabriel) عليه السلام]*. Their translation was in accordance with what most of the exegetical interpretations pointed out. Translating these terms as Gabriel (Gibrael) (PBUH) goes with *Al-Baghdādi's*, *Najīb's*, *Qatāda's* and *Al-Dahhāk's* interpretations. *Hilālī* and *Khān* here pursued the strategy of translating by adding some explanation which can be used in interpreting the culture-specific concepts. *Pickthall* and *Yūsuf Ali*, on the other hand, adopted the strategy of word by word translation which occurs when a SL word or phrase is translated into a TL word or phrase, without deeply considering the style, but more important adapting the text to the TL syntactic rules. When a literal translation is rendered, without indicating more information through brackets or a footnote, the verse may be misunderstood. This strategy can sometimes be used in translating culture-specific expressions, but in the case of religion-specific terms more clarification is needed to convey the intended message. As for *Pickthall*, he provided some footnotes that rendered his translation to agree with *Hilālī* and *Khān's* translation. Concerning *Yūsuf Ali's* translation, it would have been more adequate if some notes clarifying the source text had been included.

Source language text 3

وَقُلْنَا حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ . [Sūrat Yūsuf, Āya (verse) 31]

Transliteration: Waqulna hāsha lillāh ma hādha basharan in hādha illā malakun karīm.

Below are the three translations of the above Quranic text:

- Exclaiming: Allah Blameless! This is not a human being. This is no other than gracious angel. (*Pickthall*)
- They said: Allah preserve us no mortal is this is none other than a noble angle. (*Yūsuf Ali*)
- They said: "How perfect is Allah (or Allah forbid)! No man is this! This is non other than a noble angle!" (*Hilālī* and *Khān*)

The underlined expression, as a whole, in the Quranic text above can be categorized as culture-specific because of its availability most often in religious texts than it is in any other type of text. This also indicates the absolute perfection of *Allāh*, the creator of all the worlds, which clearly implies its religious culture specificity. Whereas *Ba'ibaki* in *Al-Mawrid* included the expression حاش لله with the meaning 'God forbid', *Wehr* did not include it in his dictionary which might be a sign that this expression is absent in the non-Arab societies which in turn assures the cultural specificity of the phrase. The best reliable sources that must be referred to in translating such expressions are those credited Quranic exegeses.

Najīb (2006, 338) pointed out that حاش لله means "no imperfection can be ascribed to *Allāh*! i.e. far be it from *Allāh* to be imperfect, *Allāh* is blameless." *Zamakhshari* in his interpretation of these words agrees with what is indicated by *Najīb* that حاش لله shows that no deficiency or imperfection can be attributed or ascribed to *Allāh* the Almighty and the Exalted. *Al-Tabari* and *Al-Qurtubi* stated that حاش لله means معاذ الله *ma'ād Allāh* which is stated in *Najīb's* dictionary as '*Allāh* forbid'.

By referring to the concerned text above in various dictionaries and the Quranic exegeses mentioned in our discussion hereinabove, it is extracted that the three translators referred to different interpretations while dealing with the expression حاش لله. *Pickthall* translated it literally which will be more appropriate if he adds some clarification for the word 'blameless' according to the Quranic context. *Yūsuf Ali*, on the other hand, used 'preserve' which the LDOCE explained as "to save something or someone from being harmed or destroyed." If

some notes are added to give more indication of the perfection of *Allāh* the Exalted as stated in this *Āya*, it will be clear and more adequate translation. As for *Hilālī* and *Khān*, they referred to more than one exegesis when they translated this expression which makes it more possible to grasp the intended meaning of the source text.

Source language text 4

[*Sūrat Yūsuf*, *Āya* (verse) 87]

وَلَا تَبْأَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ -

Transliteration:

Wala tay'asū min rawḥ illāh.

Pickthall, *Yūsuf Ali*, *Hilālī* and *Khān* translated the above underlined words respectively as follows:

- and despair not of the Spirit of Allah.
- and never give up hope of Allah's soothing mercy.
- and never give up hope of Allah's mercy.

Grammatically speaking, the genitive construction is what characterizes this phrase. The noun رَوْح here is attributed to the unique name of our creator *Allāh* which may be considered as a sign of expressing religious denotation which in turn indicates its cultural specificity. The religious terms in general and the Quranic ones in particular are unique and inimitable. Pickthall (1930, vii) observes that

The Quran cannot be translated. That is the belief of old-fashioned sheikhs and the view of the present writer. The book is here rendered almost literally and every effort has been made to choose befitting language. But the result is not the Glorious Quran, that inimitable symphony, the very sound of which moves men to tears and ecstasy. It is only an attempt to present the meaning of the Quran and peradventure something of the charm-in English. It can never take place of the Quran in Arabic, nor is it meant to do so.

Most of the exegetical interpretations of Quran are agreed in interpreting the phrase رَوْحِ اللَّهِ which can be transcribed here as (*rawḥ*) not (*rūḥ*) in *Sūrat Yūsuf*. *Al-Ṭabari* pointed out that it is Allah's mercy, hope and relief and that Muslims must not despair of this great gift of *Allah*. It is also included in *Al-Ṭabari's* exegeses that *Wakī*, *Qatāda*, *Ibn Ishāq* and others all support the same interpretation. *Albaḡhawī* and *Albaḡhdādi* as well interpreted this phrase exactly as interpreted by *Al-Ṭabari* and many others. They maintain that رَوْحِ اللَّهِ is the mercy of *Allah* that He endows to those Muslims who work hard for the sake of Allah and who keep patient in hard situations and in cases of extreme sufferings.

(LDOCE, 1031) illustrated what the word *mercy* means. It is noted that "if someone shows mercy, they choose to forgive or to be kind to someone who they have the power to hurt or punish."

Noticeably, Pickthall's translation of the expression رَوْحِ اللَّهِ did not seem to match any of the interpretations we referred to while investigating the translation and the strategy used to transfer this religious text. In Arabic language the two words رَوْح and رُوح which can be called homographous i.e. words which have different meanings and different pronunciation but the same spelling. This is what we are concerned with here. The word رَوْح in Arabic can be transcribed as (*rūḥ*) which means spirit or soul; it can also have the transcription (*rawḥ*) that means Allah's mercy or relief. In explaining some points in semantics, (Thakur 1999, 32-33) mentions three classifications of homonyms, one of which is that words with different meanings and different pronunciation but the same spelling. This feature can be noticed in the words رَوْح and رُوح which might be ambiguous to non-native translators to differentiate between them. In this case, translators must have deep understanding in Arabic semantics since they may mix while translating such ambiguous words. Pickthall here translated the word (*rawḥ*) as spirit which mismatches the various interpretations concerning this word which illustrated this word as mercy of *Allah*. Pickthall here used the literal translation which will be more appropriate in translating this expression only if he used the precise equivalent lexical item such as mercy. As for *Yūsuf Ali* and *Hilālī* and *Khān* conveyed the meaning of the source text more appropriately. Both translations were according to what is stated in the different Arabic exegesis which noted that رَوْحِ اللَّهِ is Allah's mercy and the hope of Allah that Muslims must not give up. *Yūsuf Ali*, *Hilālī*

and *Khān* used the literal translation which is noted by Nida as the *dynamic equivalence*. This strategy proved its trueness in translating some culture-specific expressions, whereas in some other cases, more clarification is needed to make the ST clearer and unambiguous.

Source language text 5

[*Sūrat Al-Baqarah*, Āya (verse) 158]

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ -

Transliteration:

Inna aşafā wal marwata min sh`ā'ir illāh.

The three translators we are concerned with translated the above part of the Quranic verse as follows:

- Lo! (the mountains) *As-Safa* and *Al-Marwah* are among the indications of Allah. (Pickthall, 46)
- Behold! *Safa* and *Marwah* are among the symbols of Allah. (Yūsuf, 21)
- Verily! *As-Safa* and *Al-Marwah* (two mountains in Makkah) are of the symbols of Allah. (Hilālī and Khān, 32)

In referring to various English-Arabic dictionaries and vice versa it is noticed clearly that the word *شَعَائِر* (*sha`īrah*), whose plural form is *شَعَائِر* is a religion-specific concept that is culturally bounded term. In his dictionary of religious terms, (Najīb 2006, 578) figures out that *شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ* are "rites of Allah = Allah's sacred rites (rituals, observances, ceremonies, acts of worship) of Islam." *Ba`lbaki* (1995, 672), on the other hand, agrees with Najīb in giving the meaning of this word. He stated that it means "rite, rituals (religious) ceremony." Wehr set forth the meaning of the word *شَعَائِر* (*sha`īrah*) whose plural is *شَعَائِر* as "religious ceremony, rite... also places of worship." (Wehr 1976, 474). All the above mentioned dictionaries match each other in explaining the meaning of the word *شَعَائِر* (*sha`ā'ir*).

(LDOCE 2009, 1422) explained the meaning of the word 'rite' as "a ceremony that is always performed in the same way usually for religious purposes." Hornby (2006, 73552) has also defined the term 'rite' as "a ceremony performed by a particular group of people, often for religious purposes." which confirms the data collected above.

Some translators used the word 'symbol' in interpreting the word *شَعَائِر* in the above verse of the Quran. Looking the word 'symbol' up in several dictionaries, it is observed that it indicates a totally different denotation of that of the word 'rite'. (LDOCE 2009) figures out that one of the word *symbol* meanings is "someone or something that represents a particular quality or idea." which might still convey an obscure vision to non-Arab and non-Muslim readers.

As for the various exegesis of the Quran we referred to have all showed agreement in interpreting the term *شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ*. They also maintained the clarifications that Najīb and *Ba`lbaki* have included in their dictionaries. *Albaghawī*, *Albaghdādī* and *Al-Ṭabarī*'s interpretations have included nearly the same explanation concerning the expression *شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ*. They all indicated that they are the marks and places that Allah set to be worshipped in either by remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), praying and performing duties that Allah imposed and prescribed on His worshippers. As Ibn Kathīr (1999, 471) claims, "*شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ* are the rituals that Allah ordained for Ibrahim in pilgrimage (Hajj) rites."

According to the above discussion concerning the interpretation of the phrase *شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ*, it can be noted that the three translations of this phrase require some more explanation or notes so as to convey the message clearly and more appropriately. *Yūsuf Ali* and *Hilālī* and *Khān* used the word 'symbols' to translate the word *شَعَائِر* which may cause some ambiguity to non-Arab readers since the meaning of performing religious rituals may not be implied in this translation. Pickthall, as well, used the word 'indications' in his interpretation which also needs more clarification to match what is stated in different Arabic exegesis and various dictionaries. Accordingly, it can be inferred that the strategy of the literal translation which the translators dealt with in interpreting the phrase *شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ* did not produce a precise equivalence. Notes, paraphrasing or explaining translation can be more adequate strategies to deal with those culture-specific concepts.

Source language text 6

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا. [Sūrat Al-Baqarah, Āya (verse) 168]

Transliteration: Yā 'ayuhannāsu kulū mim mā fil 'ardi ḥalālan ṭayyiban

The underlined Quranic phrase above was translated by Pickthall, Yūsuf Ali, Hilālī and Khān respectively as follows:

- O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and wholesome in the earth.
- O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good.
- O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth.

Religious terms cannot be appropriately translated by providing their dictionary equivalents. The dictionary equivalents of these terms may be considered within the framework of Nida's approximation in translation where equivalents are given only to approximate the meaning in general terms and not the details because the content of these terms is highly different from the content of their equivalents (Kashgari2011, 52). The word حلال (*ḥalāl*) has the literal equivalent *permissible* in English as stated in Al-Mawrid and Najīb's Dictionary of Religious Terms which does not convey the extra levels of social and religious meanings that the Arabic terms denote. The word حلال (*ḥalāl*) in the Islamic culture refers to a large number of practices and customs that are permitted (or not permitted) according to the Islamic law. It also refers to some specific Islamic laws governing food and drinks as in the case of the present verse. Al-Tabari and Al-Baghawi indicated that the word حلال denotes what is permitted according to the Islamic law which Allah legislated and which was brought to us by His messenger Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him (PBBUH).

Pickthall and Hilālī and Khān used the literal translation in rendering the word حلال into English. They used the word *lawful* as an equivalent which is only a dictionary equivalent. Referring to the context in which such words appear, it is recommended to translate them using transliteration with a short explanation including some examples to convey their specific meaning since it is not sufficient to use merely dictionary equivalents in this case. Yūsuf Ali, as well, used the literal translation including some footnotes which made his translation more intelligible. In addition, distinguishing between the word and its antonym can sometimes make the meaning clear and more understandable. Here, the translator can give definitions of what *ḥalāl* (lawful) and *ḥarām* (forbidden) mean to clarify the meaning.

Source language text 7

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ. [Sūrat Al-Baqarah, Āya (verse) 2]

Transliteration: dhālikal kitābu lā rayba fīhi hudan lilmuttaqīn.

I think that the availability of more than one religion in this world entails the availability of multiculturalism. According to this, it can be found out that the aspects which are concerned with religions may be considered as cultural ones. The word المتقين (*almuttaqīn*), as stated in various dictionaries and exegeses, is one of religion-specific aspects.

The above Quranic text has been translated by Pickthall, Yūsuf Ali, Hilālī and Khān as follows:

- This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off (evil).
- This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah.
- This is the book (the Quran), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqūn [the pious believers of Islamic Monotheism who fear Allāh much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allāh much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained.)]

The word المتقين (*almuttaqīn*), which is the plural noun of the singular one متقي (*muttaqīn*), is explained in Wehr's Arabic-English dictionary as *pious* or *God-fearing*, while Al-Mawrid indicated that it means *cautious*,

careful or weary. Najīb (2006, 916) explains it as the "one who fears Allah, the God-fearing, pious and the righteous". He also goes to give more clarification when he said that *المتقي* is the "one who shields oneself against the wrath of Allah and the one who wards off Allah's wrath by devotions and good deeds." As a dictionary of religious terms, Najīb gave a closer interpretation for the word *المتقين*. As for Ba'lbaki and Wehr, they only gave equivalent words which are not enough to be used in translating the Quranic term *المتقين*. The word *pious* which is used in some dictionaries as an equivalent for the word *المتقين* is explained in the (LDOCE 2009, 1241) as "having strong religious beliefs and showing this in the way you behave."

It is stated by some of the prophet's companions (*Ṣaḥābah*) that the first four verses *Āyāt* of *Sūrat Al-Baqarah* were about the believers. According to *Albaḡhawī*, *المتقين* are the believers. *Ibn Kathīr* stated that *Ibn Abbās* said that *المتقين* *almuttaqīn* are the believers who avoid *shirk* with *Allāh* and who work in His obedience. He also said that they are those who fear *Allāh's* punishment, which would result if they abandoned the true guidance that they recognize and know. They also hope in *Allāh's* mercy by believing in what He revealed. *Qatāda* said that *المتقين* are those whom *Allāh* described in the following *Āya* (verse) when He said: *الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ* [who believe in *Alghayb* (known only to Allah) and perform *Ṣalāh* (prayers)].

Based on the discussion above, I can find out that the translation of such culture-specific terms may not be appropriate and may not convey the ST intended meaning unless they are more clarified by giving more explanation or including some footnotes. Dictionary equivalents may not be enough to convey the intended message of such terms.

Pickthall's translation of the word *المتقين* in the Quranic text above does not give what it exactly signifies. By referring to the Quranic exegeses this translation needs more clarification of who are *almuttaqīn* mentioned in the *Āya*. *Yusuf Ali* used the phrase who fear Allah for translating the word *المتقين* which is partially appropriate, but he made it clear when he included some explanation for the word *التقوى* *attaqwā*. *Hilālī and Khān*, as well, were successful in capturing the intended meaning of the word *المتقين* since they included some clarification that matches what is stated in some exegeses.

Findings and Results

Here, we are to focus on the findings we have come up with while analyzing the data discussed concerning the above mentioned terms in addition to providing some suggestions and recommendations so as to make it more probable to deal with culture-specific aspects in the process of translation. Below is a list of the study findings:

1. Quran is the inimitable word of Allah. The translation of the meaning of the Quran will not be free from distortion, because some of the words in the Quran seemed to have more than one meaning.
2. Based on the analysis of the data collected, it has been found that there are five translation strategies included: 1) literal translation. 2) translation by a more general word (superordinate) 3) translation by a less expressive meaning. 4) translation by paraphrasing. 5) translation by using loan words from the source text with explanation. Some of these strategies are included in Baker's book 'In Other Words' to be used by professional translators.
3. According to the analysis of the non-equivalent, cultural and religious aspects in *Surat Al-Baqarah* and *Sūrat Yūsuf* of the Holy Quran, it is elicited that the best strategy that can be used in translating them is the one that can maintain, as far as possible, both meaning and effect. Literal translation is mostly blocked because of the availability of some linguistic, semantic and cultural constraints which may lead to an inevitable loss of meaning. In this case, some other translation strategies should be used. In such cases the literal translation may fulfill the purpose if only supported by explanation as shown in some of the analyzed aspects.
4. Using the paraphrasing translation, loan words with explanation and sometimes literal translation with explanation that matches what different exegetes include can be considered to be more appropriate in translating the examined non-equivalent aspects.

Conclusion

To conclude, dealing with non-equivalent aspects in the process of translation is not an easy task. Culture-specific terms and expressions is a classification of non-equivalence that needs deep understanding of both the source and the target cultures. Some religious aspects which can be enrolled under the category of culture-specific are inimitable and untranslatable since the absence of their, exactly, matching equivalents in the target language. No specific method can be used to convey the intended message of such aspects; however, they can be translated by referring to their exact message in the source text.

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The List of Abbreviations Used in this Paper

PBBUH	Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TL	Target Language
TT	Target Text
M.P.	Mohammed Pickthall
Y.A.	Yusuf Ali
H&K	Hilali and Khan