

The Language of Command in Various English Quran Translation

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Abstract- Quran is the holy book for Muslims which mainly function as guidance. It was revealed in Arabic and for the maintenance of its originality the Quran must be in Arabic, if it is not in Arabic, it is not the Quran. The translation of the Quran into any languages is called translation of the Quran and it is not called the Quran. Theoretically, this can be accepted because the translation of one language into other languages will never be able to transfer the idea completely. There must be something missing because literal translation will not be able to convey the cultural message a word contained due to the different culture of the language. Moreover, subjectivity of the translators is indispensable result from for example their background of knowledge. Consequently, different translator will end up with different translation. This research aimed at analyzing and comparing five English Quran translation in translating the verses of command to see the similarities and differences. The findings of this research revealed that there are some similarities and differences among the five English Quran translation in translating commands. The similarities and differences related to the use of words as well as grammatical constructions. However, those differences do not lead to differences in meaning.

Index Terms- command and prohibition, English Quran translation, verses, translators

INTRODUCTION

The need for translation today is absolutely indispensable to communicate ideas from one language to another in writing form. Translation itself is a form of communication between people of different languages around the world. In theory, translation is defined as the transfer of ideas from one language to another, from the source language to the target language. In the process of translation, it must be able to transfer ideas completely and perfectly. (Dweik & Abu Helwah, 2014). Failure to do this will lead to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the ideas. For this reason, a translator must

have the skills required to become a translator such as mastering the target language and source language as well.

Translation itself is more needed in line with current global developments where communication between regions in the world can no longer be limited. Developments in all aspects such as technology, communication, transportation, politics, culture are required to always be communicated from one region to another in this world. For that reason, a translation is needed because each region has a different language. With this translation, obviously, it makes communication among people from all over the world much easier.

Translation is also necessary for religious life to understand the holy book as the guidance. For example, Quran as the holy book for the Muslims. As is known, the Quran uses Arabic, while Muslims are not only Arabs but all nations in the world. To be able to understand the Koran, the readers must understand Arabic. In fact, most of the Muslims outside the Arabs do not speak Arabic so they cannot understand the Quran. For that, in order to be understood by non-Arabs, the Quran must be translated into other languages. For the purpose that the Koran can be understood by all readers around the world globally, the Koran must be translated into English as a global language.

Translating religious texts, especially the Quran as a holy book, is not an easy job. It takes the expertise of a translator to be able to translate the Quran from the original Arabic language to the target language, for example English. Gerding-Salas (2000) states that to be able to translate Islamic texts a translator is required not only to be bilingual or multilingual, but also to be bicultural and multicultural. This is because the translation process is not only related to linguistic issues but also cultural transfer issues. However, there have been many translations of the Quran into English that have been produced by translators to meet the needs of readers in understanding the Quran for English speakers. Among these translations are The Holy Qur'an by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Quran in English by Talal Itani, The Clear Quran by Mustafa Khattab, The Qur'an by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, and The Glorious Quran by Muhammad M.

Pickthall. These five translations become the object of the present research by analyzing and comparing the translations produced in translating the verses of the Quran related to the commands of Allah SWT. The purpose of this research is to see if there are similarities or differences in the results of the translation of the verses related to the commandments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For Muslims, the Qur'an is the words of Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic. Experts recognize the quality of the language of the Qur'an so that it cannot be imitated even by Arabs themselves. Even Manafi-Anari (2012) said that the language of the Qur'an is not Arabic but the language of the Arabic Qur'an, which is Arabic specifically for the Koran. This is also acknowledged by Abdalati M. Ali (2020) that the Arabic language of the Qur'an is not only unique but also very complex lexically and grammatically. This is why the Qur'an is very difficult to be translated into any language. Translators must be able to present a translation that can be read and understood by conveying the right meaning. They have to make sure that they are able to translate all the meanings contained in the Qur'anic language into the target language. The conveyance of the meaning contained in the source language must be fully confirmed or which is often claimed to be the universe of discourse. According to Lefevere (2004) the Universe of Discourse is considered as a complete set of ideologies, concepts, people, and objects that are appropriate to a particular culture. In his view, translators need to balance between the discourse of the original text and the discourse of the target language. For this reason, Ali (2012) recommends that a committee of experts in various field of knowledge such as language, culture, history and science of the Quran should be involved in the process of translation.

Schwarz, Laura, and Diana-Bianca (2016) mention some problems related to difficulties in translation such as Language problems, Cultural problems, Textual problems, and Pragmatic problems. Language problems consist of Terminological Problems, Lexical Nature of Problems, and Stylistically Problems. Ali (2012) lists some linguistic problems in translating Quran into English such as Lexical Problems, Syntactic problems, Semantic Problems, Metaphor, Metonymy, Ellipsis, and Polysemy. Cultural problems occur due to the differences between two different cultures – the culture of the source language and the culture of the target language. In translating Quran into English, the two different cultures are Arabic culture and English culture. Textual problems refer to the coherence and cohesion of the textual elements. The Pragmatic problems frequently occur between the source text and target text are the target text reader/source; the transmission path between the message text source/target text, the motivation of the source text/target text, and the text function for both the target and source.

Jahanshahi, Maryam, and Reza Kafipour (2015) found out in their research that the most frequent errors made by students in translating Islamic text into English was related to language problems. When there are similarities between the two

languages – the source and the target language – problems related to language can be reduced. On the contrary, the more the differences, the more difficult the translation process.

One of the forms of language problem is the use of imperative in expressing command. In translating Qur'an into English, the translator should understand the forms and functions of imperative in both languages: Arabic and English. Ingeish, and Saadiya (2009) list several meanings of imperative in Arabic when used in different context. They are Permission, Supplication, Request, Advising and Guiding, Educating by Instruction, Wishing, Disabling, Threat, Insult and Humiliating, Alternative/choice, Obligation/Duty, Urging, Notification, Informing, Irony, Taking a warning or a lesson from, Approval, Putting on the Same Level, Honoring, Astonishment, Thankfulness, Subjugation, Total Acceptance, Give the Lie to Someone, and Making Someone Regret or Grieve for Something. They also compared the meaning of imperative in English which include Permission, Supplication, Request, Advice, Instructions, Wish, Challenge, Threat, Insult, Exhortation, Advertising, Irony, Warning, Suggestion, Invitation, Offer, Promise, Prohibition, Condition, Defiance, and Plea. They revealed from the analysis of the imperative forms in English and Arabic that there are no strict one –to one similarities between the implications of the imperatives in English and their equivalents in Arabic.

RESEARCH METHOD

This is an analysis and comparative study conducted to see the similarities and differences of different English Quran translation. Five eminent English Quran translation were analyzed to see the differences and similarities in translating the selected verses of command and prohibitions. Three selected verses of Quran from the five translations related to command and prohibitions were taken to be analyzed. The analysis aimed at comparing and finding the similarities and differences. If they are similar, in what way they are similar, and if they are different in what way they are different. The five English Quran translation under investigation are The Holy Qur'an by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Quran in English by Talal Itani, The Clear Quran by Mustafa Khattab, The Qur'an by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, and The Glorious Quran by Muhammad M. Pickthall.

FINDINGS

1. الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ (CH 2 – Al Baqarah: 190)

No.	Translator	Translation
1	Yusuf Ali	Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you
2	Talal Itani	And fight in the cause of God those who fight you
3	Pickthall	Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you

- 4 Mustafa Khattab Fight in the cause of God only against those who wage war against you
5 Abdel Haleem Fight in God's cause against those who fight you,

2. **خُذِ الْعَفْوَ** (CH 7 – Al A'raaf: 199)

No. Translator	Translation
1 Yusuf Ali	Hold to forgiveness
2 Talal Itani	Be tolerant
3 Pickthall	Keep to forgiveness
4 Mustafa Khattab	Be gracious
5 Abdel Haleem	Be tolerant

3. **وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا** (CH 17 – Al Israa': 23)

No. Translator	Translation
1 Yusuf Ali	and that ye be kind to parents.
2 Talal Itani	and that you be good to your parents.
3 Pickthall	and (that ye show) kindness to parents.
4 Mustafa Khattab	and honour your parents.
5 Abdel Haleem	and that you be kind to your parents.

DISCUSSION

1. **الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ** (CH 2 – Al Baqarah: 190)

From the translation, all of the translators follow the basic construction of command or order in English which use verb 1 or infinitive. The first verb used is also the same where all of the translators used the verb 'fight'. However, the differences that can be seen here are related to the use of 'in the cause of', 'in the way of', and in God's cause', the use of God and Allah, the use of against, and the insertion of the word 'only'.

The use of 'in the cause of' and 'in the way of' does not have significant different in meaning. The first concerns more on the reason to fight, that is for the God, and the latter concerns on the way to fight which has to be in line with the way that the God wishes. The construction 'in the cause of God' and 'in God's cause' have no difference in meaning. Both of them are acceptable in English grammar. Different use of word God and Allah does not bring different understanding because in Islam, Allah is the name of the God. Consequently, anytime the word God is used, the reference will be Allah. The use of word 'against' after the word 'fight' (fight against) is merely to emphasize that the opponent is the enemy. Without using the word 'against' the word fight has already mean that we fight with our enemy. The insertion of the word 'only' in the translation 'Fight in the cause of God only against those who wage war against you' is to accentuate the teaching of Islam that fighting is only allowed if Muslims are attacked. Muslims are prohibited to start the fight.

2. **خُذِ الْعَفْوَ** (CH 7 – Al A'raaf: 199)

All of the translators start the command using verb 1 or infinitive. However, they use different types of verbs to start the command or order. Two of them use full verb, while the other two use 'be' followed by adjective. Other differences are on the use of word 'forgiveness', 'tolerant', and 'gracious'.

In English, the use of 'be' followed by adjective is a form of imperative to give suggestion or advise. In this translation, the adjectives used are tolerant and gracious. These two words are closely related in meaning. Gracious is characterized by kindness and courtesy. One form of kindness is tolerant. Those who are tolerant must be kind, and consequently, gracious. The same goes for the word forgiveness. If you are forgivable, you are gracious. Thus, the use of different words in this translation does not deviate from the original meaning of the word 'afwu' in Arabic.

3. **وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا** (CH 17 – Al Israa': 23)

From the translation, only one translation follows the rule of imperative to give command or order in English by using verb 1 or infinitive without mentioning the subjects. The other four use other construction – by mentioning the subjects. Other differences are on the use of 'ye' and 'you', the use of 'kind' and 'good', the use of 'kindness as the noun form of 'kind', and the use of 'parents' and 'your parents'.

In imperative sentences in English, the subject is normally eliminated because it is already clear who the command or order is addressed to, that is the second person. However, the subject can also be mentioned to give emphasis. So, the use of any of these two constructions does not influence meaning. In religious scripts, some old English words are still used like thou, ye, thee, etc. Ye is used for 2nd person plural subject. This is the same as you which is used now to mean 2nd person singular/plural subject/object. So, the use of ye and you in this translation has the same meaning. The use of different words 'kind', 'good', and 'honour' is just a matter of the translators' choice of words., They are all synonymous, so they convey exactly the same meaning. The use of your parents as the objects aims to clarify the reference is the parents of the receiver of the command, not anyone else. The translation 'and that ye be kind to parents' without using your parents, also means the same. Thus, the use of your parents is merely to give emphasis.

CONCLUSION

The finding of the present study leads to conclusion that different English Quran translations have similarities as well as differences in the translation of selected verses of command. The differences are in the form of grammatical construction and the choice of words or diction. The difference construction for translation of verses of command does not change the meaning. They still convey the meaning of command as the original language. The same thing goes for the difference in the word choices of the translators. They use different words which are synonymous. Hence, this does not cause different meaning.

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