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UNTRANSLATABILITY IN  
ALFATIHAH OF THE ENGLISH  
TRANSLATION OF THE QUR'AN

*by* Hendra Darmawan

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## THE UNTRANSLATABILITY IN ALFATIHAH OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE QUR'AN

Hendra Darmawan

Ahmad Dahlan University Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Email: hendradar@yahoo.com

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this article is to show that the Cultural background of the translator influences very much the result of the translation. It also takes place in the English translation of the Quran. The tasks of the translator one of them were nearing the source language to the target language.

**Methodology:** The writer found notes in order to study the distance between the source and the target language. The untranslatability can be viewed as linguistically and culturally.

**Results:** The result of this article is that the notion of the sentence in the Alfatihah which sometimes is only translated into phrase interchangeable. It can be a convention of the practice of translation.

**Implications:** Through the article, the writer wants to bridge a better understanding of native speakers learning Arabic and it's vice versa, minimize inaccuracies and uncouthness. This study helps minority Muslim countries that are emerging Muslim communities in Europe, Australia, and many others to learn the Quran.

**Keywords:** *Untranslatability, Source language, Target language, Quran interpretation, Alfatihah.*

### INTRODUCTION

(Madjid, Nurcholish, 2002) stated that there would be many obstacles to have a good translation of the Quran. Since English has rich vocabularies, words and terms to represent the culture of Arabic, the English translation of The Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Asadare described having enough acquaintance of Arabic, history of the Arab and other apparatus of being an interpreter. However, it is difficult to translate the Quran into English unless the translator has adequate knowledge.

(Madjid, Nurcholish, 2002)also emphasized that it was a great pleasure for us to have Professor Mahmud Yunus who was very popular of having classic tradition mastery and Arabic mastery then his translation of The Quran was not named by him as A Quran translation but Quran Interpretation.

### THE ARABIC SENTENCES

Anwar (1992) states that: Alkalamuhuwallafdzul Maracaibo bil wad I '

a sentence is arranged words that have a complete meaning

There are some characteristics for making a sentence, as follow

1. Lafadz( word ) that is Asshoutulmusytamila 'laba'dhilhurufilhijaiyyah

( a sentence must have words to be arranged),

2. Murokkab( arrangement) that is ma tarakkaba min kalimatain fa aktsar.

( a Sentence must be arranged from two or more words ) e.g

( Zaid is standing ) Murokkab can be a noun phrase, e. زيد قائم

سبحان الله The most of holy God)

1. Mufid ( have an advantage ) that is

ما اذفاءدكيحسن السكوت من المتكلم والسا معليها

( A sentence must have the advantage to give the understanding so that the listeners feel pleased because they understand what they heard)

.e. كيف حال زيد? ( how is Zaid?)



So if a speech can not be understood such as ان قام زيد (If Zaid stands), it is not *mufid* and it must be accomplished by another word e.g

( If Zaid stands, I stand)

ان قام زيد

2. *Wadh'i* ( have a meaning ) that is

جعل الفظ دليلة على معنى

A sentence must have words having to mean. Talking by using Arabic in oneself sleeping is not called Waaha

The Arabic sentences divided into two types : (Anwar, 1992)

1 الجملة الاسمية The nominal sentence

2 الجملة الفعلية The verbal sentences

1) The nominal sentence

The sentence commencing with a noun ( isim)

2) The verbal sentences

The sentence commencing with a verb ( fiil)

In order to determine the type of sentences in the case of sentences that commence with the Huruf or particle, the word appearing immediately after the Harf is considered. If the word appearing immediately after the particle is a verb, the sentence will be classified as a verbal sentence, and if it is a noun the sentence will be classified as a nominal sentence. e.g.

The house is beautiful. (Nominal)

.البيت جميل

knowledge is beneficial. (Nominal)

.العلم نافع

The woman is intelligent. (Nominal)

.المرأة ذكية

The student reads the book.( Verbal)

.قرأ الطالب الكتاب

Zaid is eating bread. (Verbal)

.يأكل زيد خبزا

To know the elements of the Arabic sentence, we have to know about verbal, sentence and nominal sentence. Anonym states that:

جملة فعلية، وهنكل جملة تبتدئ بفعل تتكون من فعل وفاعل، واحيانا مفعول به وجملة اسمية، وهي كل جملة تبتدئ باسم وتتكون من مبتداء وخبر

The verbal sentence is every sentence begun with verb consisting of fii'l (verb), and fail (doer/ subject), and sometimes maf'ulbih (object) whereas nominal sentence is every sentence begun with noun consisting of muftada' and khobar."

The Arabic grammarians divide the simple sentence, from the point of view of the word if begins with, into nominal, which begin with a noun; and verbal which begins with a verb from those explanations, the elements of Arabic sentences can be seen from:

1. Verbal sentence (جملة فعلية)

If the sentence is a verbal sentence, the elements of sentence consist of:

a) Fiil( فعل )



Al-Ghulayaini in Jami'ud-durusil 'Arabiyah states that :

"الفعل مادل على معنى فى نفسه مقترن بزمن"

(3) والفعل كلمة تدلّ على معنى فى نفسها واقتربت بزمن وضعها

والفعل كلمة تدلّ على عمل حدث فى الزمان الماضى او الحاضر او المستقبل

From those definitions, we may take the conclusion that Arabic verb is a word showing or indicating itself and the time.

#### UNTRANSLATABILITY

Catford distinguishes two types of untranslatability, which he terms linguistic and cultural. On the linguistic level, untranslatability occurs when there is no lexical or syntactical substitute in the target language (TL) for a source language (SL) item. (Bassnett, Susan, 2002; Luo et al., 2018)

Catford's category of linguistic untranslatability, which is also proposed by Popovič, is straightforward, but his second category is more problematic. Linguistic untranslatability, he argues, is due to differences in the SL and the TL, whereas cultural untranslatability is due to the absence in the TL culture of a relevant situational feature for the SL text. (Al-Ghulayaini, Musthofa, 1987)

If culture is perceived as dynamic, then the terminology of social structuring must be dynamic also. Lotman points out that the semiotic study of culture not only considers culture functioning as a system of signs but emphasizes that 'the very relation of culture to the sign and to signification comprises one of its basic typological features.' (Bassnett, Susan, 2002)

#### DISCUSSION

The underlined words at the table above are verbs and the words in light blue are objects. The words in reds are a nominal form, traditionally called *masdar*, whose meaning and form is related to that of a verb. Masdar in Arabic is similar with gerunds in English. Hamdu is a form of masdar from verb (*rohmayarhamu*). The translation should be in the form of gerund- praising. *Hamdullah* means praising Alloh. *Robbu* is masdar from (*robbayurobbi*) meaning lording. (Darmawan, Hendra, 2005 ,Golkar et al., 2014)

**Table 1:** A note on comparison among the three version of the English Translation of the Quran

No	Verses	Verbal Sentence (al jumlah al fi'liyah)	Nominal Sentence (Al Jumlah al Ismiyah)	Translation
1.	Bismillahirrohani rrohim		√	In the name of Alloh, the most gracious, the most merciful. (Alhilali, Muhammad Taquiuddin, and Khan, Muhammad Muhsin, 1996) In the name of Alloh, the entirely merciful, the especially merciful (Almuntada Al Islami, 2004:1)
2.	Alhamdu lillahi robbil alamin		√	In the name of God, The Most Gracious, The Dispenser of Grace (Asad, Muhammad, 2000 ,Emam&Shajari, 2013) All the praises and thanks are to Alloh, the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn, and all that exists). (Alhilali, Muhammad Taquiuddin, and Khan, Muhammad Muhsin, 1996) (all) praise is (due) to Alloh, Lord of the worlds. (Almuntada Al Islami, 2004:1) ALL PRAISE is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds (Asad, Muhammad, 2000,Emam&Shajari, 2013)
3.	Arrohmanirrahim		√	The most gracious, the most merciful (Alhilali, Muhammad Taquiuddin, and Khan, Muhammad Muhsin, 1996) The entirely merciful, the especially merciful(Almuntada Al Islami, 2004:1) the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace. (Asad, Muhammad, 2000,Emam&Shajari, 2013)



4.	Malikiyaumiddin	√	<p>3</p> <p>The only owner (and the only ruling judge) of the day of recompense (i.e the day of resurrection). (Alhilali, Muhammad Taqiuddin, and Khan, Muhammad Muhsin, 1996) Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. (Almuntada Al Islami, 2004:1) Lord of the Day of Judgment! (Asad, Muhammad, 2000,Emam&amp;Shajari, 2013)</p>
5.	Iyyaka na'budu waiyyaka nasta'in	√	<p>3</p> <p>You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help (for everything). (Alhilali, Muhammad Taqiuddin, and Khan, Muhammad Muhsin, 1996) It is you we worship and we ask for help. (Almuntada Al Islami, 2004:1) Thee alone do we worship, and unto Thee alone do we turn for aid. (Asad, Muhammad, 2000,Emam&amp;Shajari, 2013)</p>
6.	Ihdi nassirotol mustaqim	√	<p>3</p> <p>Guide us to the Straightway. Alhilali (1996: 10) Guide us to the straight path- (Almuntada Al Islami, 2004:1) Guide us the straightways (Asad, Muhammad, 2000,Emam&amp;Shajari, 2013)</p>
7.	Shirotolladzinaan'a mtaalaihimghoiril maghdubialaihimw aladhhoollin.	√	<p>5</p> <p>The way of those on whom you have bestowed your grace, not (the way) of those who earned your anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians). The path of those upon whom you have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked (your) anger or of those who are astray. (Almuntada Al Islami, 2004:1) the way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, not of those who have been condemned [by Thee], nor of those who go astray! (Asad, Muhammad, 2000,Emam&amp;Shajari, 2013)</p>

## CONCLUSION

We found two points in the English translation of the Quran. At first, sentences containing verbs were translated in a proper way but another one that sentences without verbs were also translated into sentences with verbs in the target language. (Shihab, Quraish, 2007, Chacón, Juan Aspeé, Eduardo Cavieres-Fernández, and José González Campos. 2018)

The untranslatability we found in the English translation of the Quran is mostly at the linguistic level, it took place because of limited lexical terms of the targeted language. Another thing that distinguishes Arabic from English is stem or root in Arabic words. The roots of the words vary the meaning in the target language. So that the translator should determine which word is relevant for the target language or the translator also should interpret words in the sentences of the source language.

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