
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Linguo-stylistic Problems Faced in Translating the Meaning of "Fitrah" in the Holy Quran into English

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| ABSTRACT

This paper primarily explored the linguo-stylistic problems faced in translating the meaning of Fitrah" in the Holy Quran into English. The key significance of this study is how the translators attempted to tackle linguo-stylistic problems when rendering the implication of Quranic lexeme Fitrah" into English. The main question of this study is: what are the linguistic and stylistic problems that the translators of the Holy Quran meet while translating the meaning of Fitrah into English? Moreover, three selected English translations of the Holy Qur'an are used by the two researchers to accomplish this purpose: Marmaduke Pickthall's (1996), Muhammad Muhsin Khan's, Muhammad Taqiudin Al Hilali's (1996), and M. A. S Abdul Haleem's (2004). The study results revealed that some linguo-stylistic problems were found when rendering translating the meaning of Fitrah into English.

| KEYWORDS

Fitrah, Linguo-stylistic, Holy Quran, translating, problems

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1. Introduction

The Holy Qur'an is the superior animate power in Islam as it is the crucial and basic source of Islamic teaching, belief, legislation, and moralities. Muslims believe that the Holy Qur'an is a Divine book revealed by Allah Almighty on the Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings be upon him). The Holy Qur'an, which is comparable with any other judiciary and sacred books, needs exegesis. Qur'anic interpretation, known as "tafsir" in the Arabic language, is the knowledge through which one raises comprehension of the Holy Qur'an and apprehension of its commands, instructions, wisdom, and precepts.

Islam is called the religion of fitrah because it is the religion that leads humanity to true faith in Allah and makes out completion of their potential "fitrah" which can evolve, or be developed, towards positive or negative tendencies (Suyadi, Susilowati, & Supriyatno, 2021). It is fitrah for people to seek something that was initially in their inner side, which is faith that can help them find gladness and serenity. The word "innate" (fitrah) was mentioned in several texts of the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an displays the position of the mind, and Allah Almighty honors and eulogies the virtuous minds as it differentiates them from the rest of minds by thinking and means of direction; therefore, we will make essential needs that show the place of the mind and Fitrah in the Holy Quran.

The Holy Quran is the magnum opus of the Arabic language from rich prosody of this any angles such as linguistics and stylistics. The lexicon, mode, elegance, effect, and masterwork, which take to its linguistic and stylistic singularity, are the miracles of a Miracle, i.e. the Holy Quran (Al-Kaabi, 2012; Laude, 2010).

1.1 The Concept of Fitrah in the Holy Quran

The word "fitrah" comes from the Arabic radicals' fa ta ra, the verbal noun being fatrun. The root action means he cloves, split, slit, rent, or cracks it. The usage of the first form, fatarahu (He created it) (Lane, 1972; Bhat, 2016).

Believing in the existence of Allah is innate in mankind. This inborn instinct is called 'fitrah' and is generally defined as the immaculate nature within human beings that guide them to acknowledge the truth of Allah's existence and to follow His direction. It is an inherent tendency to assert a surpassing being who created us, the world around us, and all that is in it. This present from Allah has been inscribed upon our souls. As we know fundamental facet of the fitrah is Tawheed, faith in the Oneness of and the Uniqueness of Allah, with no partners. (Omer, 2012; Koenig, & Al Shohaib, 2014). This belief tends a person to submit entirely to Allah and to try to become closest to Him. Islam is called the religion of fitrah because it is the religion that guides humanity to true faith in Allah and complete fulfillment of their potential. "We have indeed created man in the best of moulds (fitrah)" (Tin, or The Fig:4) - لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَن تَقْوِيمٍ - Laqad khalaqnal insaana fee ahsani taqweem.

1.2 Translation of the Holy Quran into English: At A Glance

The Quranic text is so unique in its meanings, forms, contents, eloquence, and cadence that it seems any rendering of the Holy Quran directly ends up being the word-for-word of Allah and consequently cannot be matched with the Holy Quran in its genuine Arabic form. Indeed, each of the renderings is an interpretation that has been rendered into English.

Translatability of the Holy Quran is defined as "a relative notion that has to do with the extent to which, despite obvious differences in linguistic structure (grammar, vocabulary, etc.), meaning can still be adequately expressed across languages" (Hatim and Munday, 2004). The above-mentioned definition takes into account all the linguistic elements; it is possible to consider a different context and co-text and extra co-text of a text in the target language (Wills, 1982). "The translatability of a text is thus guaranteed by the existence of universal categories in syntax, semantics, and the (natural) logic of experience. (Ibid: 49). To sum up, linguistic untranslatability occurs when the linguistic form has a function beyond that of conveying factual relationships and is, therefore, a constituent part of the functional equivalence to be achieved (Ardakani et al.,2015; Alhaj, 2022).

The current paper is a linguo-stylistic analytical study that aims at exploring the linguistic and stylistic problems encountered in translating the meaning of Fitrah" Innateness " in the Holy Quran in three translations of the Holy Quran by Mohammed. A. S. Abdel Haleem, Mohammed. M Pickthall and Mohammed Khan and Mohammed Taj Al-Din Al-Hilali. Specifically, it aims to identify linguo-stylistic problems of translating the meaning of Fitrah" innateness into English, explore the linguo-stylistic losses in rendering the meaning of Fitrah" innateness into English, probe how these linguo-stylistic losses can be tackled and inquiry about the strategies used by the three translators (Mohammed Abdel-Hakeem, Khan and Hilali, and Mohammed Pickthall in rendering the meaning of Fitrah into English. (Alhaj, 2020).

2. Related Previous Studies

There has been no single research paper exploring the linguo-stylistic problems faced in translating the meaning of Fitrah in the Holy Quran into English to date; still, there is no independent research that examines the topic in English. Therefore, this paper is the first to probe the phenomena. Rare studies are exploring the topic of Fitrah in Arabic; for example, Al-Shamari(2011) pursued research on the effect of sense and desires in changing what is in the soul. Findings indicated that the senses are the first steps followed by the Devil to mislead human, and the Holy Quran warned that the soul is the center of desires and is what made Cain kills Abel, so beware of them. Qarni (2006) studied Al-Fitra for Muslims. The findings displayed that Instinct (Al fitrah) is one of the joyful and important subjects in Muslim life: Which forms a strong relationship between humans and their Lord. Al fitrah is conduct and religion safety from imperfection, which is fixed by Allah in His servant's hearts. So, abeliever by instinct does not need his parents' advice if they let him choose his way. While parents advise their children to convert to other religions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research paradigm

In this research paper, the two researchers adopted the analytical descriptive qualitative method because of the convoluted nature of the investigated text (i.e., The Holy Quran). As recommended by Creswell (1994), a qualitative study is carried out when researchers search for comprehension of a difficult issue and when quantitative analysis and analyses do not seem proper for the search query under examination. (quoted in Al-Haj,2020). The study aims at exploring the linguo-stylistic problems faced in translating the meaning of Fitrah in the Holy Quran into English. Furthermore, the two researchers analyzed the Arabic Quranic verses and compared and gauged them to the three different translations of the Holy Qur'an by Mohammed Abdel-Hakeem, Khan and Hilali, and Mohammed Pickthal.

3.2 Design of the study

The focal point here was a descriptive study in which some ayahs of fitrah were selected by the two researchers in Suras of the Holy Quran and its three English translations by three translators of the Holy Quran, namely, Mohammed. A. S. Abdel Haleem, Mohammed. M Pickthall and Mohammed Khan and Mohammed Taj Al-Din Al-Hilali.

3.3 Data Analysis

To find out the linguistic and stylistic problems encountered in translating the meaning of fitrah in Holy Qur'anic (verses) Ayahs, the two researchers used comparative analysis to analyze the collected data and then read the original texts of Qur'anic (verses) ayahs in Arabic and compared them to their English translation version.

3.4 Procedures

The procedures utilized by the two researchers to carry out the recent study were as follows:

1. Studying the Arabic Quranic text and locating the items under study (i.e. Al fitrah in the Holy Quran).
2. Identifying Al fitrah, which are prudently and carefully selected verses in the Holy Quran and their equivalents in the three English translations of Mohammed. A. S. Abdel Haleem, Mohammed. M Pickthall and Mohammed Khan and Mohammed Taj Al-Din Al-Hilali.
3. Reading the renderings and comparing the given rendered expressions of Al fitrah not only with one another but also with the Arabic Quranic original text.
4. Identifying the translation strategies employed by the three English translators in rendering the Al fitrah of the source text.

4. Results and Discussions

Examples of the linguo-stylistic analytical of some selected rendered (Verses) Ayahs of the Holy Quran that contained expressions of Al fitrah.

Example 1

Source Surah: Chapter (30:30) sūrat l-rūm (The Romans)

ST: (فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا (الرُّوم/ 30))

Transliteration: Fa aqim wajhaka liddeeni Haneefaa; fitratal laahil latee fataran naasa 'alaihah; sūrat l-rūm (The Romans):30

Target Text:

- (1) **Abdel Haleem:** So [Prophet], as a man of pure faith, stand firm and true in your devotion to religion. This is the natural disposition God instilled in mankind– there is no altering God's creation (Sūrat l-rūm:30)
- (2) **Khan and Al-Hilali:** So set you (O Muhammad SAW) your face towards the religion of pure Islamic Monotheism Hanifa (worship none but Allah Alone) Allah's Fitrah (i.e. Allah's Islamic Monotheism), with which He has created mankind. (Sūrat l-rūm:30)
- (3) **Pickthall:** So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright - the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created man. (Sūrat l-rūm:30)

5. Discussion

5.1 The Meaning of the Ayah

Allāh, the Almighty says: "So set your face and keep on your adherence to the religion which Allāh has prescribed for you, the worship of Allāh Alone; the religion of Allāh to which Allāh has guided you and which Allāh has made perfect with the utmost perfection for you. In addition, let yourself be in adherence to the sound Fitrah (i.e. Allāh's Islāmic Monotheism) with which Allāh created His creation. For, He created the creation in such a way that will instinctively lead them to know Him, worshipping Him Alone and admitting the fact that there is no Deity worthy of worship but Him; as He says: and made them testify as to themselves (saying: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes...") It is recorded in the Hadith that Allāh said: "I created My servant's monotheists, then the Shayatin misled them from their religion.

5.2 Evaluation of the Translation

To approach the meaning of the Arabic Quranic lexeme فَطَرَ faṭara (based on Tafisir Ibn Kahir, vol 3,p.1665)in the ayah, all three translators used the communicative method. Abdel Haleem rendered it into" This is the natural disposition God instilled in mankind"; Khan and Al-Hilali translated it into" with which He has created mankind" and Pickthall into" He hath created man" respectively. Abdel Haleem resorted to the weak implication in his rendering of the intended lexeme; therefore, his rendering is inaccurate and confusing. According to Khan (2008):

When literal translation seems ambiguous or confusing, an experienced and competent translator adds footnotes or marginal notes, or short explanatory notes, with regard to the receptor's comprehension difficulties. However, subjectivity is not permissible in the Qur'anic translations. These notes have been used for two functions: 1. Overcome linguistic and

cultural discrepancies, both in Arabic and English languages .2. To add useful information for a better and easy understanding of the Qur'anic Message.

Hilali & Khan, on the other hand, use couplet (a translation method that combines two procedures to deal with a single problem, "literal translation + explanation") to convey the intended meanings of the lexeme قَطَرَ faṭara to the receptors because they combined their translations with an explanatory note. Hence, Hilali & Khan's rendition of the meaning of lexeme قَطَرَ faṭara (seems quite natural in its context and adds to communication and comprehension; therefore, their translation has a strong implication.

Moreover, contrary to the traditional word "God" which was used by Abdel-Haleem, Khan and Hilali, as well as Pichhall, used the real name 'Allah' in this ayah, which may be appreciated by some and criticized by others in the English community. However, contextually, it is quite appropriate. Also, this may result in better comprehension if the receptor is familiar with the word "Allah', which has more divinity.

Example 2

Source Sura: Chapter (36) Sūrat Yā sīn:22)

ST: وَمَا لِي لَا أَعْبُدَ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (يسن:22)

Transliteration: Wa maa liya laaa a'budul lazee fataranee wa ilaihi turja'oon) Sūrat Yā sīn:22)

Target Text:

- (1) **Abdel Haleem:** Why should I not worship the One who created me? It is to Him that you will be returned. Sūrat Yā sīn:22)
- (2) **Khan and Al-Hilali:** And why should I not worship Him (Allah Alone) Who has created me and to Whom you shall be returned? Sūrat Yā sīn:22)
- (3) **Pickthall:** For what cause should I not serve Him Who hath created me, and unto Whom ye will be brought back? Sūrat Yā sīn:22)

6. Discussion

6.1 The Meaning of the Ayah

'And why should I not worship Him (Allāh Alone) Who has created me meaning, 'What is there to keep me from sincerely worshipping, the One Who has created me, without ascribing others alongside Him in worship.' and to Whom you shall be returned. i.e. on the Day of Appointment (Resurrection), when He will requite you for your deeds. If they are good, then yours will be the good end (Paradise), and in case they are bad, yours will surely be bad(Hellfire). (Ibn Kathir, Vol 3.1885)

6.2 Evaluation of the Translation

There are no constraints in the three renditions of the Arabic Quranic lexeme faṭaranī (from Arabic into English and vice-versa because the implication of these lexemes is approximatively the same thing in English and Arabic. Therefore, the three translators' renditions of the Arabic Quranic lexeme faṭaranī are accurate and adequate and rank the best and leave no chance of lexical ambiguity (Alhaj, 2022). To sum up, Abdelhaleem, Khan, Al-Hilali, and Pickthall's renderings carry semantic comprehensibility and have strong implications. Furthermore, the three translators employ this style to maintain the linguo-stylistic context.

7. Conclusion

This study aims to probe the linguo-stylistic problems faced in translating the meaning of Fitrah" in the Holy Quran into English in Abdelhaleem, Khan, Al-Hilali, and Pickthall's renderings. Moreover, the paper aims to identify the pertinent translation strategies employed. The results of the study revealed that the three translators adopted various translation strategies, such as literal translation and couplet translation, to render the Qur'anic words Fitrah into English. (see example 1 and example 2). Moreover, the study also showed that both literal translation and couplet translation are not always proper (See example 1) Finally, the study stated rendering the Qur'anic Fitrah'into English and the equivalence of this Arabic lexis is arduous work and problematic. (See examples 1-2).

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