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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## The English Translations of the Qur'an by Jews: A Critical Study of Nessim Dawood's Translation "The Koran"

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**ABSTRACT**

The research aims to examine the English translation of the Qur'an by Jews. To fulfill the aim of the study, the researcher used the analytic method to scrutinize how the translator achieves the purpose of the source text or misrepresents it. Thus, the study discusses the translator's competence comprehensively, gives a selective and detailed analysis of each translation, and compares the target text with the holy source text, accurately identifying the translation errors resulting from the impacted background of the translators. The research concludes with a more accurate translation and sound explanation/interpretation of the mistranslated verses. It clarifies the biography of N.J. Dawood, features of his translation, objectives, sources, readership, motives, structure, and his method. The merits and demerits of Naseem's translation will be tackled. The study attempts to explore the negative effects of impacted translation of the Qur'an and how to avoid them. The study exposes how the mindset of the translator contributed to producing the target text. It refers to the responsibility of the translator and the rules that should control his work, e.g., transferring the meaning honestly, avoiding any ideological impact on the target text, using accurate and proper equivalent words, and relying on authentic sources. In conclusion, the selected translation proved to be influenced by certain ideological impacts. Under such an influence, the translator uses his own special strategy to convey his prejudiced ideas to the readership.

**KEYWORDS**

The Holy Qur'an, Translation, Mistranslation, Misrepresentation, Jews

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**1. Introduction**

The current study investigates the decisions of translators and their influence on the translated text. The impact of translators' knowledge begins with the selection of the text. Text selection depends on two criteria: (1-) how translators look at the source; (2-) what is the impact they want to create? Thus, Muzaffar Iqbal (2009), in *The Qur'an, Orientalism, and the Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, argues that literature about the Qur'an is divided into four categories: (1-) exegetical literature produced by Muslims explaining the message of the Qur'an from a variety of different perspectives; (2-) polemics were written by the old trend of Orientalists to refute the Qur'an; (3-) works of the new trend of Orientalists attempting to distinguish themselves from polemical works; (4-) the contemporary academic works on the Qur'an with characteristic claims of objectivity and dispassionate scholarship (7-11).

It has been a constant endeavor of the Orientalists to probe into the Qur'an since the rise of Orientalism itself. According to Muhammad Mohar Ali (2004), they attempted to prove that the Qur'an is a product of the human mind and hand. "Basically, this attitude on the part of non-Muslims is as old as the Qur'an itself". The disbelievers of Mecca, who were the immediate audience of the Qur'anic revelations, made exactly the same affirmation, saying that these were only Prophet Mohammed's sayings and the Qur'an mentioned that (24 الممتثر) "إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ" "This is nothing but the word of a human being" (Surat al-Mudathir 24). They also claimed that the Prophet was a poet and a sorcerer or he had been taught by people of the scriptures; thus, his sayings

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were mere ancient legends, and the Qur'an points out this in verse (الفرقان 5) "وَقَالُوا أَأُتِىَ الْآثَرِينَ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَكُتِّبَتْهَا قَهَى تُمْلَى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا" (Al-Furqan 5) (Al-Hilali and Khan 1996). The Qur'an refutes all these allegations as follows: (1-) Allah declares that The Qur'an is not a composition of a human being (الحاقة 43) "تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ" (Al-Haqqa 43) (Al-Hilali and Khan 1996); (2-) The Qur'an has been sent down in the Arabic language as inverse "إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا" (Yusuf 2) (Al-Hilali and Khan 1996); (3-) Allah assuages his Prophet and commands him to bear with patience the objection and rejection of the disbelievers (الأنبياء 41) "وَلَقَدْ أَسْتَهْزِئُوا بِرُسُلِي مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَخَاقَ يَالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ" (الأنبياء 41) (Al-Anbiya' 41) (Al-Hilali and Khan 1996).

The selected translation in the study represents a misrepresentation of the English translation of the Qur'an by Jewish translator Nessim Joseph Dawood who claimed, in the introduction of his translation, that violence and war were projected as the Prophet's main preoccupations. Some translators are overwhelmed by pseudo-rationalism in interpreting the Qur'an, especially verses that deal with the unseen, miracles, the punishment of Fire and the reward of Paradise. The impact of theological belief is plain in verses that explain Islam, show the status of Prophet Muhammad, assert the humanity of Jesus, and address the family of the Prophet. These verses expose the sectarian opinions which the translator claims and applies according to the mindset. The study will focus on these issues in detail and review the solutions to extant translation without pitfalls. It also scrutinizes and explores how the original qur'anic text is distorted by translation. Moreover, it points out mistranslations and misinterpretations resulting from that distortion.

## **2. Literature Review**

Hussein Abdul-Raof (2001) explores the translational problems and main aspects of the Qur'anic text. The author discusses the theory of translation and its practical contribution to the translation of the Qur'an. He seeks to make this book a comprehensive reference in applied translation studies. The book is useful for researchers in translations of the Qur'an and Islamic studies. The writer especially focuses on Qur'anic exegesis and exegetical problems. Muhammad Mohar Ali (2003) wrote the book in five years and exerted a great effort to produce this work. It is a translation and interpretation of Qur'anic verses in three volumes. It is useful to seekers of knowledge. He places the Qur'anic text and translation side by side to facilitate understanding of the text. Abdur-Raheem Kidwai (2004) explores the different references that work on the Qur'an. The survey is divided into six sections and consists of ten bibliographies, four concordances, twelve contents guides, six categories, seven dictionaries and glossaries and two encyclopedias. The author tries to help researchers and translators to get the main references in the field of translation of the Qur'an, but most of these sources are not available online. Juliane House (2015) defines translation and translation quality assessment and then explores different approaches to translation and translation quality assessment. This book is a new treatment of translation quality assessment designed to update the previous versions of a model for translation quality assessment (House 1977, 1997). The main parts of the book are the model of House in translation quality assessment (1977) and the revised model (1997). It is a useful book in this field. Maysa Abu-Rumman (2007) describes the problem of referential gaps in translating the Qur'an. It aims to compare four translations and present verses that involve referential gaps and suggests strategies that overcome these gaps. She aims to tackle the problem of cultural gaps in translating unmatched cultural elements by drawing evidence from selected translations of Qur'anic verses. She suggests a strategy for translators of the Qur'an to deal with the referential gaps.

## **3. Methodology**

The research uses a critical approach to scrutinize the English translation of the Qur'an by Nessim Joseph Dawood from the perspective of mainstream commentaries, doctrine, Quranic sciences, and contrastive linguistics. The researcher seeks to explore how the translators achieve the purpose of the source text or misrepresent it. What is the followed method? Who is the readership of the translation? It gives a selective and represents the detail of the translation with a comparison. It discusses the Suras (chapters) gradually and examines the translation of the meaning in verses that need to develop. How did the translator cover the linguistic gaps in his translation?

Nessim was born on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1927, in Baghdad, his family members were Jews, and his name was Yehuda. He translated and wrote English stories which were published in newspapers and was awarded a scholarship in 1944. He obtained his degree in English literature from London University and, five years later, produced many translations from Arabic into English. The translation of the Qur'an and *Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah* "introduction" are considered his main works (Kidwai 2004). He worked as a teacher, translator and journalist. After producing his translation of the Qur'an in 1956, he was known as a commercial translator and founded his company in 1959. Dawood became a trusted resource for the Ministry of Defense in Britain and other government departments in their dealings with the Middle East. He died in 2014.

Dawood is considered the only Jew who produced an English translation of the Qur'an. Moreover, he produced it at the age of twenty-nine, and there are 70 editions of his translation. Most of these editions were published by Penguin and sold over a million copies. According to Kidwai, the first edition was published simultaneously in the UK, USA, and Canada. This translation is available

in 2000 libraries and online. There is a huge difference between translations which were issued before and after 1990 because the earlier editions adhere to the rearrangement of Suras, while the later editions stick to the traditional order. The researcher uses two editions of Dawood's translation as follows: 1) *The Koran*, 1974 in 452 pages and 2) *The Koran, the Word of God as revealed by Muhammad*, 1997 in 468 pages.

Dawood describes the Qur'an as the finest work of Classical Arabic prose. It refers to the Islamic belief about the Qur'an. Like Bell, he believes that Prophet Muhammad was influenced by Jewish and Christian teachings in the beginning, then affected by Hanifs. He claims the Qur'an is inscribed upon the heart of Prophet Muhammad (not received mainly through the archangel). He seeks to write a version in the contemporary English language which is intelligible and helps the modern reader understand the Qur'an. He argues that the Qur'an contains many statements which are vague and obscure because they were borrowed from other sources. Thus, he tries to expose these ambiguities wherever they occur. He uses footnotes to clarify his point of view and present a clear translation. Dawood depends basically on his work on commentaries, e.g., Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Baidawi and Al-Jalalayn. He also rejects all theories about cryptic letters. Dawood's work mainly consists of a concise bibliography of the translator on one page and two indexes in both versions of 1974 and 1997, but in 1974, the two indexes related to the traditional and chronological orders of the Qur'an were on 8 pages. For the chronological order, Dawood has his own chronological order, which begins with the Makkan surahs and then the Medinan ones.

Dawood aims to help the general reader to read the translation of the Qur'an and remove any obscurity in the Qur'anic text. After thirty-four years, he uses the traditional order when all modern translations depend on this one, and many researchers and studies reject his order. Dawood knows that Muslim scholars deny his chronological order, but he assumes the new order will be easier for the reader. Dawood's translation also has an introduction that deals with the Qur'an, the Prophet's life, and the Prophet's composition of the Qur'an, according to Dawood's view and delivers the revelation. Thirdly, he deletes the numbering of the surahs and divides each Chapter into passages, where some verses are missed, and others are not translated. Fourthly, he inserts a chronological table which points out the main events during the Prophet's life. The fanatic attitude is clear, especially in points which refer to the Jews. Fifthly, there is a page indicating the main four revised editions of the translation and another one for the main works by Dawood. He focuses on the human sources of the Qur'an and divides these sources into three main categories: firstly, Jews and Christians teachers of the Prophet, so he was affected by their creed even though there are not any authentic pieces of evidence supporting this claim. Secondly, Dawood considers the Hanifiyah, which calls for monotheism and denies idolatry, as the second source, whereas the Prophet followed the Hanifs and learned knowledge from them. Al-Sartawi explains that Dawood intends to hide the fact that there was a Prophet called Ibrahim who first appealed for the Hanifiyah, which was the religion of Quraysh before idolatry had worshipped the Arabian Peninsula. Thirdly, he believes in receiving some verses during dreams and asserts this purport while the Prophet was sleeping on Ramadan night when Jibrael came to him and recited the Qur'an. Then, when he woke, these words were inscribed upon his heart. Dawood concentrates on verses which clarify the corruption of the people of the scriptures and how they distorted the core of their laws was the main mission of Islam. The chronological table indicates to events which happened between the Prophet and the Jews fundamentally. According to Nessim Dawood's translation, the order of Suras is as follows:

Sura Title	Sura Number	Sura Title	Sura Number	Sura Title	Sura Number
Lugman	31	Al-Mursalat	77	Al-Fatihah	1
Ar-Rum	30	Al-Qiyamah	75	Az-Zalzalah	99
Al-Ankabut	29	Al-Mudaththir	74	Al-Infitar	82
Ash-Shu'ara'	26	Al-Muzammil	73	At-Takwir	81
Al-Furqan	25	Al-Haqqah	69	Al-Insan	76
An-Nur	24	Al-Qalam	68	Ar-Rahman	55
I-Mu'minun	23	Yunus	10	Nuh	71
Ta-Ha	20	Al-Mulk	67	Al-'Adiyah	100
Al-Isra'	17	Al-Qasas	28	Al-Falaq	113

Al-Hijr	15	An-Naml	27	An-Nas	114
Al-A'raf	7	At-Taghabun	64	At-Tin	95
Al-Fil	105	Al-Munafiqun	63	Ad-Dhuha	93
Quraish	106	Al-Kahf	18	Al-Layl	92
Al-Masad	111	Ibrahim	14	Al-Fajr	89
Al-Ikhlās	112	Al-Jum'ah	62	Al-Inshirah	94
Al-Jinn	72	As-Saf	61	Al-'Alaq	96
Al-Mumtahanah	60	Al-Hadid	57	Al-Qadar	97
Al-Hashr	59	Al-Waqi'ah	56	At-Takathur	102
Al-Mujadilah	58	Al-Qamar	54	Al-'Asr	103
Al-Hujurat	49	An-Najm	53	Al-Humazah	104
Al-Fat'h	48	At-Tur	52	Al-Ma'un	107
Az-Zumar	39	Adh-Dhariyah	51	Al-Kauthar	108
Sad	38	Qaf	50	An-Nasr	101
Al-Ahzab	33	Muhammad	47	Al-Bayinah	98
Al-Anbiya'	21	Al-Ahqaf	46	Ash-Shams	91
An-Nahl	16	Al-Jathiyah	45	Al-Ghashiyah	88
Al-Anfal	8	Hud	11	Al-Balad	90
At-Taubah	9	Ar-Ra'd	13	Al-A'la	87
Al-Baqarah	2	Ad-Dukhan	44	Maryam	19
An-Nisa'	4	Az-Zukhruf	43	At-Tariq	86
At-Talaq	65	Ash-Shura	42	Yusuf	12
Al-Ma'idah	5	Fusilat	41	An-Naba	78
Al-Kafirun	109	Ghafar	40	Al-Isra'	17
An-Nas	110	As-Saffat	37	Az-Zukhruf	43
Al-Haj	22	Ya-Sin	36	Al-Inshiqaq	84
Al-Imran	3	Fatir	35	Al-Mutaffifin	83
Al-An'am	6	Saba'	34	'Abasa	80
At-Tahrim	66	As-Sajdah	32	An-Nazi'at	79

Table (A) Nessim Dawood's order of Suras

### 3.1 Mistranslation and Misinterpretation

The study focuses on how the translator misunderstood and mistranslated the text. The target text will be compared with the source one according to authentic Islamic interpretations, e.g., Al-Tabari, Ibn-Kathir, Al-Bagawi, Ibn-Ashour, Al-Alusi, Ibn-Atiyah, Zad al-Massir, Fath al-Qadeer, Al-Baydawi, and Al-Tasheel.



ascend; the fourth means sae'da, which means has climbed up height. Muslim scholars explain the word "Istawa" as the high position over the throne. Allah alone knows the reality of istawa'a. The proper translation could be "The Most Beneficent (Allah) Istawa (rose over) the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty)", as suggested in Al-Hilali and Khan (1996).

Dawood translates *Al-Kursi* as a throne in (البقرة: 255) "وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ" "His *throne* is as vast as the heavens and the earth" (2:255) (Dawood 1997). Ibn-Taymiyya (1991) narrated that Muhammad ibn Abdullah said, "Kursi is the footstool in front of the throne" (*The Names and Attributes* 42) (My translation). The difference between the "throne" and "Kursi" resembles the position, greatness and description ("Arish" is pointed out in detail but a few narrations about the "Kursi"). Ibn-Abbas also narrated that "Kursi", which extends over the heavens and the earth is Allah's footstool. Dawood does not refer to the difference between "Kursi" and the "throne" because he does not examine proper Islamic sources, which might have helped him to render the correct translation. The proper translation could be "His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth", as suggested in Al-Hilali and Khan (1996).

Allah's "Coming" is pointed out in three verses (البقرة: 210) "هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِّنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ" "Are they waiting for God to come down to them in the shadow of a cloud" (Al-Baqarah 210) (Dawood 1997), "هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ" "Are they waiting for the angels or your Lord to come down to them" (Al-An'am 158) (Dawood 1997), and (الفجر: 22) "وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا" "your Lord comes down with the angels" (Al-Fajr 22) (Dawood 1997). We should believe in this attribute according to Allah's glory and perfection. The commentators explain the first verse "the angels will come in the shade of clouds but Allah will come in a special way (No one knows except Him)". The second and third verses refer to the coming of Allah plainly but Dawood mistranslates this attribute.

Dawood mistranslates attribute of "Shin" e.g. (القلم: 42) "يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ" "On the day the dread event unfolds and they are told to prostrate themselves, they will not be able" (Al-Qalam 42) (Dawood 1997). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Allah shall bare His Shin, and then all believers, men and women, shall prostrate themselves before Him, but there will remain those who used to prostrate themselves in the world for showing off and for gaining a good reputation. Such a one will prostrate himself, but his back will become a single (vertebra) bone (so he will not be able to prostrate)" (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, 1996 Vol.6, Hadith no.441). (Muhsin Khan's translation).

Allah's "Self" is mentioned in some verses (المائدة: 116) "تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ" "You know what is in my mind, but I know not what is in Yours" (Al-Ma'idah 116) (Dawood 1997), Dawood mistranslates this attribute and uses *the mind*. The proper translation could be, "You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself" (Sahih International 1997).

Dawood and Bell have both misinterpreted Allah's "Face" e.g. (القصاص: 88) "كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ" ("All things shall perish except Himself" (Al-Qasas 88) (Dawood 1997). Dawood translates the verse without referring to the proper meaning or the correct explanation. The proper translation could be "Everything will perish save His Face" (Al-Hilali and Khan 1996).

### **3.3 Misrepresenting the Qur'anic Sciences**

According to Dawood, the Qur'an is the finest work of classical Arabic prose, but it is not a revealed book. Al-Zurqani (1995) defines the Qur'an as "the Arabic speech of Allah, which He revealed to Muhammad in wording and meaning and which has been preserved in the Mushafs, and has reached us by "mutawaatir" transmissions and is a challenge to mankind and Jinn to produce a similar book" (Vol:1, p21) (Yasir Qadhi's translation). Dawood assumes that the Prophet was influenced by Jewish and Christian teachings, and these teachings are considered the main sources of the Qur'an. He does not refer to any name of the Qur'an; even Imam az-Zarkashee (2010) provides fifty names of the Qur'an in *al-Burhan* (274-276). Allah sends down the revelation by the Archangel to save mankind from going astray. Qadhi (1999) defines "*Wahy*" in the *Introduction of the Qur'an* as inspiration and communication in a manner which is not obvious or apparent to anybody else, in a swift manner. Dawood points out only one method of "*Wahy*", and it is the revelation with an intermediary, while he ignores the "*Wahy*" without an intermediary completely. Dawood is confused on this point because he claims the Qur'an is revealed by the archangel and the Prophet received during his sleep. He does not recognize that indirect revelation occurs in two forms; by way of dreams and by direct speech from Allah. On the other hand, the direct revelation happened by sending an angel to inspire His Messenger. Ibn al-Qayyim (1991) classifies the types of *Wahy* in *Zad al-Maad* into seven as follows: true dreams, inspiration in Prophet's heart, the angel comes in the form of a human, inspiration sometimes like the ringing bell, seeing the angel in the original form, directly from Allah (Glory be to Him), and beyond a barrier (Vol1, 18). (My translation)

The translator does not clarify the period of revelation and how it gradually was sent down. The Qur'an was revealed gradually for a period of twenty-three years. He also does not clarify the various stages of revelation; the preserved book, the lower heaven, the night of decree, and descending by Jibril.

Dawood does not refer to the first and last revealed verses, and the related opinions are in the footnotes. Regarding the used versions (1974-1997) of Dawood's work, he does not provide the classification of Makkan and Madinan Suras and verses from

cover to cover in any comment or footnote. Common themes and characteristics of the Makkan and Madinan chapters also are unclear in the translation. The translator does not point to the difference between Suras' styles. No doubt there are many benefits to knowing the types of revelation and classification of Suras. Some verses have direct causes of revelation, while others are revealed without any reasons for revelation. This field of knowledge is important to the translator to know the actual meaning of verses.

Concerning the names of Suras, most of them were given by the Prophet, but Dawood uses special names which are not mentioned in other translations.

Chapter Title	Translation	Chapter Title	Translation
Al-Mutaffifin	The Unjust	Al-Fatihah	The Exordium
Al-Buruj	The Constellations	Al-A'raf	The Elevation
Al-Inshirah	Comfort	As-Sajdah	Adoration
Al-'Adiyat	The War Steeds	Fatir	The Creator
Al-Qari'ah	The Disaster	Az-Zumar	The Throngs
At-Takathur	Worldly Gain	Ghafar	Revelations Well Expounded
Al-'Asr	The Declining Day	Al-Waqi'ah	That Which is Coming
Al-Ma'un	Alms	Al-Hadid	The Emigration
Al-Kauthar	Abundance	At-Taghabun	Cheating
Al-Masad	Al-Lahab	Al-Haqqah	The Catastrophe
Al-Ikhlās	Oneness	At-Takwir	The Cessation
An-Nas	Men	Al-Infitar	The Cataclysm

Table (B)

### 3.4 Translation Problems

#### 3.4.1 Translating Islamic Terms

It is important for translators of the Qur'an to use the proper method to transform the correct equivalent of the Islamic terms. There are two main methods in translating terms; the first method is domestication, and the second one is foreignization. Scholars like Venuti criticize domestication because it does not transform the cultural aspects of the terms and does not cover all linguistic aspects in the source text. It is preferable for translators of the Qur'an to use foreignization to present the close meaning of the term. The translator who uses foreignization should transliterate and use the term in the italic form, then clarify its meaning between brackets, especially the Culture - bound words. Dawood translates *as-Salat* into prayer without any verification of its characteristic, so he mistranslates "pray for them: for your prayers will give them comfort" in verse (9:103) while the proper meaning here is "invoke" because prayer from Allah is praising and mercy, from angels, is seeking forgiveness for believers and from Muslims is the invocation. He also mistranslates, "He and His angels bless you" (33:43), even though there is a difference between prayer from Allah and angels. He also uses alms for obligatory *Zakat* and optional charity, i.e., *Zakat* into alms, even though there is a difference between them. The former is the third pillar of Islam, and the latter is gifts of money, clothes or food to poor people. Dawood translates *Sawm*, "the fourth pillar of Islam", into fasting, but he mistranslates ", I have vowed a fast to the Merciful" (19:29) because the proper meaning here is abstinence from speech. The translator also misrepresents the term *Hajj* which is the fifth pillar of Islam and transforms it into "pilgrimage", which does not cover the cultural aspect of this term because *Hajj* in Islam to Makkan at a certain time for specific rituals. Moreover, pilgrimage has a different meaning in Christianity; thus translator should clarify the meaning of the term to avoid any ambiguity in the target text regarding the readership. For translating the names of surahs, it is preferable to transliterate their names and add the meaning between brackets, but Dawood writes the meaning only without any transliteration.

### **3.5 The lexical Problems**

One of the main difficulties which face the translator while translating the *Qur'an* is the lack or the absence of equivalents, especially for words which have non-Arabic roots. Dawood translates at-Tariq into "by the nightly visitant" (86:1), which considers an inaccurate meaning of the word regarding the recent research on scientific inimitability. Unfortunately, many translators depend on traditional exegesis without scrutinizing the meaning, according to recent studies. He transliterates *Tashim* in (83: 27) without any clarification of the meaning. Islamic exegeses explain it as a fountain in the paradise or water which descends from above. Dawood translates *Hitta* into "we repent" without explaining that the word is borrowed from the Hebrew language and says that the reference is vague and is taken from some reminiscence of the attempt to enter the Promised Land at Kadesh. On the contrary, the Old Testament interprets the meaning of the word, e.g., "flour or the brown powder", as al-Fara points to its Nabataean source (*Al-Muarab* 198), so the proper meaning of this word is "Forgive us". He translates *Sibghah* into Baptism (2:138) without any explanation of the meaning in the footnote; moreover, he uses a Christian term to cover the meaning and how come Islam is Baptism of God? But the proper meaning of the word here is the religion of Allah.

### **3.6 Syntactic Problems**

Regarding the rules of translation, the translator should transform the syntactic structures without any distortion of the meaning. On the contrary, Dawood, in his work, changes the rules and removes some particles in the target text. He deletes the prefixed vocative particle almost in all verses, and this procedure distorts the intended meaning of the verse, e.g. (2:122), the target text becomes "Children of Israel" instead of (O' children of Israel). Imam al-Tabri (1983) manifests that Allah gives his prophet a lesson about the sons of Israel, whereas he will stay within the same city, and He also reminds them of His favors, blessings and saving from Pharos. Thus, the particle is important for the listener to get advice and avoid committing the same previous errors (Vol: 3, p. 573). Ibn-Ashur (2006) says, "this verse is warning sons of Israel and repeated here to pay their attention to adhere to Allah's laws and follow the right (Vol: 1, p. 698). Dawood also removes the prefixed resumption particle and uses it for "God wishes to lighten your burdens, for man was created weak" Ibn Ashur says this addition clarifies the reality of human beings and how Islam is a perfect religion.

### **3.7 Translator's Competence**

Dawood as a translator, aims to achieve his goal by translating the *Qur'an* into modern language. Moreover, he focuses on the general readership, not the cultured one. Transferring process in the subject work distorts the reality of the source text by changing the form and the content.

As for language competence, Dawood uses simplified language, which facilitates understanding the translated text, but sometimes he is unable to cover the proper meaning. That is because the translator does not have a well-grounded knowledge of Islamic sciences in general and *Qur'anic* sciences in particular. Textual competence depends on the translator's ability to know the norms of ST and TT and their subdivision, and this is one of the main problems faced by the translator here (Adab, 2000, 8). The translator also should know the linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the text. Subject competence focuses mainly on the highly specialist knowledge branch. Increasing the knowledge and recognizing the methods of how-to access are required for the translator (Adab, 2000, 9).

Dawood depends on only three Islamic exegeses to present his translation. The translator should explore about 100 branches of the *Qur'anic* sciences in addition to translation studies and source and target languages. Cultural competence means the ability to differentiate between text types with their cultural embeddedness. Thus, the translator is intercultural competent by combining the elements of different cultures in his mindset. Integration is rejected, but respecting other cultures is required. Translators of the *Qur'an* should master transforming competence and have well-grounded knowledge about the *Qur'an* to avoid any distortion of the meaning.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

Nessim Dawood is a Jewish translator who tries to present the *Qur'an* in a modern language, but he is influenced by his ideas and beliefs about Islam. He believes that Prophet Muhammad received his knowledge from Jewish and Christian teachers and produced the *Qur'an* to call his people. Dawood changes the form and the content of the source text according to his ideology. Thus, he invents Suras' names which are not proper for some Suras, uses biblical names of Prophets, not the translated ones, merges and mixes the verses, deletes the numbering of Suras, changes the form of verses into short paragraphs, separates the single verse into many parts, merges the verses into one sentence and divides the single verse into two separated sentences and more. He also rearranges the order of Suras according to their rhymes, whereas this classification was not made before by any translator.

Dawood also changes the content by inverting the structure of verses, omitting some elements of the verses, mistranslating and misrepresenting the verses, and using improper methods in translating terms. One of the main problems of this translation is foreground and background, which were used in many verses and distorted the meaning. He disregards the holiness of the *Qur'anic* text, so he misrepresents it. He deletes the particles, prepositions, transition words, conjunctions and pronouns. Even though he



claims using the exegesis of Al-Zamakhshari, he mistranslates some verses which the commentator clarifies them plainly, e.g. (An-Naba' 1).

Dawood misrepresents the names and attributes of Allah. He uses ar-Raheem instead of ar-Rahman and creator instead of the originator. Also, he misinterprets the attributes of Allah, e.g., Face, Hand, and Shin. In addition, he does not distinguish between the throne and Kursi. For comments and footnotes, he does not refer to any reason for revelation, commentator's opinions, the root of words, and clarification of using some special words, polysemy, metaphors, pun and other rhetorical aspects in verses. He winks at Qur'anic sciences and other Islamic sources in his translation.

## 5. Conclusion

Dawood aims to present intelligible translation in contemporary English for the general readers, so he uses a wide range of vocabulary, collocations and idioms in a simple language. He also depends on the exegesis of al-Zamakhshari, al-Baidawi and al-Jalalayn. His translation has a detailed introduction, a chronological table of events and an index of Surahs. It comes in one volume of about 500 pages. It has some footnotes to clarify the translator's point of view. He exerts his best effort to disclose the meaning of verses. This translation has been re-printed about 50 times, and over a million copies had been sold by 1990. The publisher of the translation is Penguin which is one of the most flourishing publishing houses in the world.

On the other hand, Dawood's work has many pitfalls. He rearranges the order of the "suras" Chapters. He claims the human sources of the Qur'an and alleges a fabricated method of delivering the revelation. Dawood misunderstands some issues related to the Qur'anic text; thus, he thinks that all eastern and western theories about disjointed letters are rejected. The translator does not investigate the authentic Islamic sources and does not know how many opinions the exegeses contain. Moreover, he distorts the form and content of the translation because he believes this is a human production. Dawood divides the verses into paragraphs regarding their rhymes, so he emerges some verses and splits others. He removes the resumption particle, demonstrative pronoun, prepositions, conjunctions, transition words and vocative particles; thus, the meaning is incomplete and incorrect in some verses. He deletes the numbering of the verses, and this causes confusion for the readership. He does not give any transliteration of Suras' names in some versions and uses the biblical names of the Prophets. He assumes that the translation is for general readers, but they misunderstand the original text if they depend on this translation only. The translator does not give accurate meaning to many issues associated with the Islamic creed and the Qur'anic sciences. Also, he uses improper methods to transform Islamic terms.

Translators of the Qur'an should have the required knowledge to perform this noble task; otherwise, they misrepresent the text. They also should avoid any ideological impacts which distort the meaning and stand beyond the falsification of the truth.

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