

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF IDIOMATIC COLLOCATIONS IN THE NOBLE QURAN: PROBLEM AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ability of translators to translate idiomatic collocations in Quranic text. Quranic collocations have the features of containing figurative or idiomatic meaning that is different from the literal meaning of the components. It is a rhetorical feature that distinguishes Quranic ones. The methodology of this study is descriptive-qualitative. An interpretive analysis is used to examine the data. The authors rely on Baker's (1992) model which indicates that cultural-specific collocations constitute a problem in translation. The findings of the study show that not all translators were aware of the idiomatic meaning of collocations. This non-awareness results in the inability, by some translators, to translate such collocations equivalently. The study also reveals that literal translation is not a functional strategy to translate idiomatic collocations. Therefore, translators should support their translations by a functional strategy. The findings of the present study have pedagogical implications for the translators in general, translators of Quranic texts and translation students and teachers. Such findings present an essential resource for researchers of Quranic translations, idiomatic meaning of the Quran and problems of Quranic translation between Arabic and English.

Keywords: Collocation; idiomatic collocation; meaning in the noble Quran; Quranic translation

Introduction

A collocation is a lexical and semantical relation between two words or more that habitually occur together to form a meaningful unit. The meaning of the collocation

cannot be predicted from the meaning of the associated words as it is “idiosyncratic” (Palmer, 1986, p. 79). Palmer (1986) illustrates his point by giving the example of the adjective (blond), which can associate with the lexical item “hair” to constitute a collocation, but not with “door”. Therefore, “blond hair” is a collocation, but “blond door” is not an acceptable one.

The importance of collocations in language and translation arises from the vital role of collocations in producing meaningful units. Thus, the ability to produce acceptable collocations is a remarkable sign of language proficiency. Moreover, collocations play a vital role in organising the relations between words which affects the cohesion and coherence of a text as they are “crucial to the interpretation of a text” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 287).

Linguists like Newmark (1988) and Baker (1992) assume that translators always face various problems in translating collocations. The mistranslating of a collocation usually results in a change of meaning or in making the translated collocation odd for native speakers. Baker (1992) argues that someone can break the law in English according to the English collocation “break the law”. However, in Arabic, the law is contradicted and not broken. The Noble Quran is considered as one of the most important resources of collocation in the Arabic language. It contains all types of collocations including the idiomatic collocations.

The translation of collocations from Arabic into English becomes more difficult when it deals with religious text. The encountered problems are due to the sensitivity of certain lexical items which are deeply rooted in Arabic culture, religious connotations of specific lexical items and the idiomatic meaning of some word combinations. Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) believe that most of the collocations of religious texts such as the Noble Quran carry unique linguistic semantic and cultural features that constitute a real challenge in translation. Ayyad and Mahadi (2019) also argue that “the translator of Quranic terms is required to be very accurate as the mistranslation of such terms may lead to a complete distortion of the meaning” (p. 319).

The present study is an attempt to discuss the problem of translating collocations from Arabic into English by discussing a sample of collocations that are collected from the Noble Quran. It hypothesises that idiomatic collocations are not translated appropriately if the translators do not pay special attention to understand the meaning of such collocation then use a functional strategy to translate it.

Statement of the Problem

Idioms can be defined as a group of words whose meaning is established by usage and not deducible from individual words (Idioms, 2005). This definition states a general introduction of the idiomatic meaning which is different from the dictionary meaning of the components of an idiom or collocation. It also indicates that idiomatic meaning requires searching for this meaning, then finding the appropriate equivalent in the target language (TL).

Most of the translations of the Noble Quran in the 20th century fail to render the idiomatic meaning of these collocations. Translators use the literal

strategy to convey their meaning which results in ignoring the figurative and idiomatic meaning in one hand and failing to render the rhetorical function on the other hand. The present study investigates the translation of idiomatic collocations in the Noble Quran into English. Since collocations in general are problematic in nature, due to the fact that their meanings cannot be deducted from the literal meaning of their constituents, then inaccurate or even faulty translation is likely to result in case translators do not pay attention in dealing with them. Quranic collocations are not an exception, especially those that carry idiomatic meaning. Such problem is more sensitive due to the sacredness of the Quranic text.

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Studies

The term “Collocation” refers to certain words that regularly co-occur with other items in a language. It was first introduced by Firth who believes that the meaning of collocation is completely a lexical one (Firth, 1957). He states that lexical meaning should be studied in two axes: horizontal (Syntagmatic) and vertical (Paradigmatic). He stresses that collocational meaning “is an abstraction at the syntagmatic level” (Firth, 1957, pp. 195-196). Thus, this meaning is not concerned with the conceptual or literal meaning of a word (Firth, 1957). Robins (2013) states that the equation of one-word meaning is rejected by Greek Stoic philosophers. They paid more attention to the semantic structure of a language. Robins (2013) also says that they believed that the meaning of a single word is not isolated because the meaning may differ according to the accompanying words. The relation between words in a collocation is a lexical relation while the use of those collocations is covered by the tendencies rather than rules. Mitchell (1975) defines collocation as the relation between words which is based on the lexical meaning more than the actual words. Mitchell (1975) adds that the inherent properties of a lexical item do not make it meaningful. However, the contrastive or deferential relationships it has with other items have this vital role to make it meaningful (Mitchell, 1975). Hence, the components of a collocation should not be translated as single word, but as one meaningful unite. This, of course, requires more investigations on the possible meanings of a word according to its accompanying word and the context where a collocation is used.

According to Baker (1992), collocations can be defined as semantically arbitrary restrictions that do not refer to the logic of the dictionary meaning of a word. The mentioned definitions of collocations indicate that the meaning of collocations is above the word level (Baker, 1992). By investigating the definition of collocations more deeply, it will be clear that most of the definitions focus on the word co-occurrence; “you shall know a word by the company it keeps” (Firth, 1957, p. 179). Another definition is stated by Cruse (1986) who defines collocations as “sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur” (p. 40). Most of the definitions offer the focus of the co-occurrence of lexical items. For example, Sinclair (1991) defines collocations as “The occurrence of two or more words within short space of each other in a text” (p. 170), while Cowie (1978) defines it as “the co-

occurrence of two or more lexical items as a realization of structural elements within a given syntactic pattern" (p. 48), and Kjellmer (1987) describes it as "A sequence of words that occurs more than once in identical form and is grammatically well-structured" (p. 133).

Due to the significant role of collocations in language proficiency, collocations were classified according to the lexical and semantic approaches in various manners. Scholars have divided them according to different dimensions such as strength, use and other dimensions. For example, Baker (1992) classifies collocations into marked collocations and unmarked collocations, while Lewis (2000) classifies them into lexical and grammatical collocations.

Arabic linguists such as Husamaddin (1985) and Ghazala (2004) and others also adopt the concept of collocations. In his outstanding work about fixed expressions and multi-word units in Arabic, Husamaddin (1985) states that collocations are a type of idioms or a form of idiomatic expressions. Husamaddin (1985) defines collocations "المصاحبة الاعتيادية لكلمة ما في اللغة بكلمات" as "المصاحبة اللغوية" [The normal occurrence of a word with certain words in a language] (p. 257). Husamaddin (1985) classifies collocations in Arabic into many types like sounds made by different animals or different objects, names of the places where animals or insects are found, group of objects and others.

The work of Husamaddin (1985) was followed by many works like Dawood (2003). Dawood's (2003) book is about the fixed expressions in modern standard Arabic. Dawood (2003) states that fixed expressions could be easily found in all types of texts (p. 10). Dawood (2003) defines collocations in modern standard Arabic as "التعبيرات التي يرتبط بعضها ببعض بعلاقة دلالية وثيقة كالترادف او التضاد او غيرها" [the lexical items that occur together based on a relation between them like synonyms, opposites or others] (p. 15). Emery (1988) discusses four types of word combinations to make a clear distinction between them. He classifies them into bound collocations, open collocations, restricted collocations and idiomatic collocations (Emery, 1988).

Empirical Studies

The translation of collocations in the Noble Quran was the material for investigations by many scholars like Abdelwali (2002), Ghazala (2004), Abdul-Raof (2007) and Dweik and Abu Shakra (2011). Most of the studies focus on the problem of translating Quranic collocations among EFL learners, the classifications of Quranic collocations and the translatability of Quranic collocations.

Abdelwali (2002) declares that translating collocations of the Noble Quran is a real problem due to the features of the Quranic language which are alien to the linguistic features of other languages. Abdelwali (2002) also argues that the rhetorical, cultural, semantic and linguistic features of the Quran are not only alien to other languages, but also "distinct from other types of Arabic prose" (p. 3). These distinct features of the Noble Quran affect the translation into other languages because they are not captured in most of the English versions of translation (Abdelwali, 2002).

Ghazala (2004) studies the collocations of the Noble Quran in two separated studies. The first study proposes the classifications of collocations based on their

grammatical, lexical and rhetorical structures. The second study discusses the problems of translating collocations and concludes to acknowledge that “Quranic metaphorical collocations create a tremendous challenge to translators who often fail to capture the cultural features of the Quranic discourse” (Ghazala, 2004, p. 26).

Abdul-Raof (2007) argues that the emotive and cultural association of the Quranic expressions pose a great obstacle to translators. He refers to this obstacle to the “stylistic variation” (Abdul-Raof, 2007, p. 1) which is one of the intriguing linguistic problems of the Quranic discourse. He adds that Quranic lexical items have conditions in their combination to other lexical items due to the unique semantic features. Thus, Quranic lexical items have restrictions to associate to other lexical items, which may not exist in other text types. Therefore, a reader of the Quranic text may find words combinations which violates the regular combination rules in Arabic such as *فبشرهم بعذاب اليم*, which have the verb “بشرهم” that means to carry positive news. However, in this context, it is used to carry the bad news of the torture.

Dweik and Abdu Shakra (2011) conduct their studies to assert the importance of studying the case of collocations in religious text. They found that translation of collocations in the religious text has always encountered lexical and semantic errors due to the “unfamiliarity with certain collocations in the source language (SL) as well as in the TL” (Dweik & Abdu Shakra, 2011, p. 32). They refer to the difficulty of translating collocations in the Noble Quran to the cultural diversity between the two languages, which results in having cultural lexical items that do not have equivalents in the TL (Dweik & Abdu Shakra, 2011).

Shammas (2013) examines the translation of collocations from Arabic into English and vice versa. The study consists of three questionnaires which were given to MA students from different universities in different Arab countries. The focus of the study was on adjective – noun collocations to limit the scope of the study. The results of the study show that students encounter difficulties in translating collocations due to the usage of literal translation strategy and the lack of bilingual dictionaries that may help students or translators to deal with collocations.

Many other studies have been conducted to find out the problems that the translators may face in translating collocations such as Zhgoul and Abdul-Fattah (2003). All of the mentioned studies show the result of low ability of translators to deal with collocations in general and in Quranic discourse in particular due to different reasons.

What is Idiomatic Collocation?

Firth (1968) states that the meaning of a word relies on the company it keeps. In other words, some fixed expressions such as collocations and idioms have a different meaning other than the literal meaning of their components. Collocations are classified into marked and unmarked collocations due to this idea. Baker (1992) states that marked collocations are unusual as they are used out of the collocational ranges to create new images. They have a special meaning, figurative images and rhetorical purposes. Idiomatic collocations have the same features of the marked ones. They have a meaning beyond the literary meaning of its components. Quran is

full of such collocations which have a rhetorical function in the Quranic text. For example, حبل الله (Literary: God's rope) is an idiomatic collocation that has a meaning beyond the components which is "The Noble Quran".

Translating such collocations requires the translator to be aware of the intended meaning. A translator may not be able to translate idiomatic collocations unless being fully aware of the Quranic meaning of such collocations. Therefore, translating idiomatic collocations is considered a problem in translating Quranic text. This will be illustrated later by examples from the Quranic texts.

Translation of Collocation

Hatim and Munday (2004) state that translating collocations starts by recognising them in the Second Language (SL) and then rendering them conveniently. In one hand, this leads to the fact of the translator's ability to read the collocation as one meaning unit. On the other hand, the ability to translate it in a collocation in the TL (i.e. find an appropriate equivalence). According to Newmark (1988), transferring collocations from one language to another is a struggle. He states that the most important role that the translator plays is to recognize the collocation first. Moreover, he states that translation is a challengeable task of finding the appropriate combination of a noun with other nouns or adjectives, adverbs and verbs. It is also a continuing struggle to find the appropriate collocating connectives or conjunctions.

The translator will not be able to find the appropriate collocation in the TL unless he has a wide knowledge of both SL and TL and their cultures. Shakir and Farghal (1991) argue that the memory of the translators should include a bank of collocations which will help them in the translation process. Hatim and Mason (1990) also discuss the collocations as a major problem that a translator may face. They note that "there is always a danger that, even for experienced translators, source language interference will occasionally escape unnoticed and unnatural collocations will flaw the target text" (Hatim & Mason, 1990, p. 112).

Baker (1992) states that the main challenge of translating fixed expressions like collocations and idioms is finding equivalence above the word level. Furthermore, she states that the translator should have the ability to work to reduce the meaning loss by knowing which feature in the SL should be valued. It is commonly known that the exact equivalence in translation is almost impossible especially between Arabic and English as they are from different origins. Larson (1984) states that finding an exact equivalence between words in a language is often. This will also produce an overlap over the translation product.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive qualitative one. The main source that constitutes the theoretical framework of this study is Baker's (1992) model, *equivalence above word level*, which deals with idioms, fixed expressions, proverbs and collocations. Baker (1992) states that translators fail to translate collocations due to five main reasons. These reasons are: (1) the engrossing effect of the source text patterning, (2)

misinterpreting the meaning of a source-language collocation, (3) the tension between accuracy and naturalness, (4) culture-specific collocation and (5) marked collocation in the source text. The focus of this study is to examine the difficulty of translating idiomatic collocations due to culture-specific collocations. According to Baker (1992), culture-specific collocations result in distorting or changing the meaning of a collocation. It also may result in having unnatural or odd collocations in the TL. Furthermore, translators may fail in rendering this collocation by using omission or literal translation. The present study hypothesises that translators have a problem in translating idiomatic collocations in the Noble Quran due to this reason.

The study sheds lights at the difficulties of translating the idiomatic collocations in the Noble Quran by discussing selected examples that are randomly selected from the Noble Quran. The number of examples is accredited based on the concept of saturation that was suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2017). They suggest the sample size of the qualitative study to be from 3-10 examples and argues that “the idea of saturation comes from the grounded theory when gathering and discussing data no longer sparks new insights or reveals new properties” (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 229). Accordingly, 20 examples are randomly selected to highlight this phenomenon, whereas 7 examples are discussed accordingly.

Procedures

The discussion of translating idiomatic collocations will be supported by examples from the Noble Quran. The researcher will follow the following steps:

1. 20 examples of Quranic collocations that have idiomatic meaning are randomly selected.
2. The English equivalents are limited to three interpretations by Hilali and Khan, Pickthal and Yusof Ali. The selection of those translations relies on the fact that Hilali and Khan’s translation is considered the best translation in the 20th century, while the translation of Pickthal is assumed to have many problems. Finally, the translation of Yusof Ali is one of the best translations. However, it has some problems.
3. 7 examples of the rendered collocations by these translators are studied and analyzed.
4. The meaning of each collocation will be given according to the interpretation of the Noble Quran, *Fi Zilalil – Quran*, by Qutb (2004).
5. By comparing the three translations according to the Quranic meaning, the effective equivalents will be identified.
6. The last step is to suggest some solutions to the problem in this study.

Scope of the Research

The selected examples for this study are categorised under the type (Noun + Noun) and (Noun + Adjective) collocations. Three translations of the Noble Quran are also selected to analyze the way that translators use to render the idiomatic meaning of Quranic collocations. Quran as a sacred text is considered a challenge to any translator. Therefore, translators try to render the words of the Quran which

sometimes leads to mistranslation or meaning deletion. Translating a collocation requires the translator first to recognise it, understand the meaning and then translate it. Baker (1992) assumes that even native speaker translators cannot, sometimes, assess the acceptability of culture-specific collocations.

Text Analysis

One of the most important principles of a successful translation is the ability to recognise the fixed expressions as a meaningful unit. Larson (1984, p. 141) states that the translator should understand the notion of collocations to provide an adequate translation of a text. In the Quran, collocations have a rhetorical function. This includes the idiomatic collocations. Therefore, misinterpretation of the meaning of such collocations will result in mistranslation because of the literal translation. This problem will be more complicated when no equivalence is available in the target language.

Table 1 shows 20 examples of collocations that have idiomatic meaning. The following examples are collected from different parts of the Noble Quran. Each collocation is provided together with its three selected translations and the idiomatic meaning according to the interpretation of the Noble Quran:

Table 1
Selected Idiomatic Collocations from the Noble Quran

ST Collocation:	Hilai & Khan:	Yusof Ali:	Pickthall:	Comment:
حبل الله (ال عمران 103)	The rope of Allah (i.e. this Quran)	The rope which Allah (stretches out for you)	The Cable of Allah	The meaning is the Quran itself.
دار البوار (ابراهيم 28)	the House of Destruction	the House of Perdition	the Abode of Loss	The meaning is the house of destruction (hell).
الصلاة الوسطى (البقرة 238)	The middle Salat (i.e. the best prayer - Asr)	The middle prayer	The midmost prayer	The meaning of this collocation is the prayer Asr.
لحما طريا (النحل 14)	Fresh tender meat (i.e. fish)	Flesh that is fresh and tender	Fresh meat	The meaning is the fish.
الملا الاعلى (ص 69)	Chiefs on high (angels)	Chiefs on high	The highest chiefs	
اليوم الموعود (البروج 2)	The promised day (i.e. the day of Resurrection)	The promised day (of Judgment)	The promised day	The meaning is the Day of Judgment.

ليال عشر (الفجر) (2)	The ten nights (i.e. the first ten days of the month of Dhul-Hijja)	The nights twice five	Ten nights	the meaning is the first ten nights of the Hijri month Dhul-Hijja
السباحات سبحا (النازعات 3)	And by those who that swim along (i.e. angels or planets in their orbits)	And by those who glide a long (on errands of mercy)	The lone stars floating	The meaning refers to the angels or planets in the sky.
الاية الكبرى (النازعات 20)	The great sign (miracles)	the great sign	The tremendous token	The meaning of the great miracles of the stick turning into a snake.
روح القدس (البقرة 87)	Ruh-ul-Qudus (Jibrael- Gabriel)	The Holy spirit	The Holy Spirit	The meaning of this collocation refers to Gabriel.
الطامة الكبرى (النازعات 34)	The greatest catastrophe (i.e. the day of recompense)	The great overwhelming (event)	The great disaster	The meaning of this collocation refers to the greatest day which is the day of Judgment.
البيت العتيق (الحج 29)	The ancient house (the Ka'bah at Makkah)	The ancient house	The ancient house	The meaning of this collocation refers to the Holy House of Muslims, i.e. the Ka'bah in Mekkah.
البيت المعمور (الطور 4)	The Al-Bait-ul- Ma'mur (the house over the heavens parallel to the Ka'bah at Makkah, continuously visited by Angels)	The much- frequented Fane	The house frequented	The meaning of this collocation is shown clearly at Hilali & Khan Translation.
شديد القوى (النجم 5)	One Mighty in power (Jibril – Gabriel)	One Mighty in Power	One of mighty powers	The meaning of this collocation refers to Gabriel.
النشأة الاخرى	another	Second	the second	The meaning of

(النجم 47)	bringing forth (Resurrection)	Creation (Raising of the Dead);	bringing forth	this collocation refers to the life after death.
ام القرى (الانعام 92)	The mother of towns (i.e. Makkah)	The mother of cities	Mother of villages	The meaning of this collocation refers to Makkah.
صاحب الحوت (القلم 48)	The companion of fish	The companion of fish	Him of the fish	The meaning refers to Prophet Jonah
الروح الامين (الشعراء 193)	Trustworthy Ruh (Jibril – Gabriel)	Spirit of faith and truth	True Spirit	The meaning of this collocation refers to Gabriel
الكتاب المبين (الشعراء 2)	The manifest Book [this Qur'ân	The book that makes (things) clear	the Scripture that maketh plain	The meaning refers to the Qur'an itself
البلد الامين (التين 3)	This city of security (Makkah)	This city of security	This land made safe	The meaning refers to Makkah

Table 1 shows that the meaning of this type of collocations is not easy to be understood without explanation. The hidden idiomatic meaning is very important to be added in the translated version. Otherwise, the TL recipients will misunderstand the intended message in the Quran. The examples show that the translators frequently use the literal translation procedure to translate this type of collocations. However, the reader of the translated version can understand that there is a hidden meaning which should be given to fully understand the verse.

It is noticed that the first translation by Hilali and Khan provides the meaning of all the selected collocations between brackets. Yousef Ali also gives the meaning of few collocations. On the other hand, Pickthall does not provide any meaning or explanation. The following examples show a full discussion of some selected collocations to stand on the problem of translating idiomatic collocations.

Example 1:

(واعتصموا بحبل الله جميعا ولا تفرقوا) (ال عمران 103)

Translation:

Hilali & Khan: The rope of Allah (i.e. this Quran) (Al-Imran 103)

Yusof Ali: the rope which Allah (stretches out for you) (Al-Imran 103)

Pickthall: the Cable of Allah (Al-Imran 103)

In this verse, Allah orders all Muslims together to hold fast to the bond of Allah i.e. the Quran. Qutb (2004) states that the rope of Allah means the Quran.

Accordingly, the rope of Allah is an idiomatic collocation that has a meaning beyond the literal meaning of the collocation components. The words “rope” and “Allah” have a specific meaning when they collocate. Therefore, the three translators misinterpret the meaning of this collocation and render the collocations

literally, except Hilali and Khan who illustrate the idiomatic meaning of this collocation by giving the meaning between brackets i.e. (This Quran).

Yusof Ali tries to describe the rope as it is stretched by Allah for Muslims. Unfortunately, he was not able to recognise the idiomatic meaning of this collocation. Pickthall was also not able to understand the meaning of such collocation. He tries to use a synonym to render the meaning of rope by using the word cable, but it did not convey the idiomatic meaning. Therefore, we can say that only one translation, which is by Hilali and Khan, succeeds in relaying the exact meaning of this collocation from the source text. The other two translators have misinterpreted the meaning of this collocation and failed to convey its meaning.

Example 2:

(الم تر الى الذين بدلوا نعمت الله كفرا واحلوا قومهم دار البوار) (ابراهيم 28)

Translation:

Hilali & Khan: the House of Destruction (Ibrahim, 28)

Yusof Ali: the House of Perdition (Ibrahim, 28)

Pickthall: the Abode of Loss (Ibrahim, 28)

In his book of interpretation of the Quran, Qutub (2004) says that the meaning of *دار البوار* is hell (2004, p. 28). We can notice that the strategy used in the three translation is the literally translation. The components of such collocations indicate that there is a meaning beyond their literal meaning, especially the word *دار* which is used to refer to a place in Judgment day. This place could be Paradise such as in *دار السلام* (the Home of Peace) or Hell such as in *دار البوار* (the Home of Destruction).

Two of the translators use the word "House" to render the meaning of *دار*, and Pickthall uses the word *abode*. Abode has been defined as the place of residence (Abode, 2005). This semantically includes the meaning of *rest and peace*. However, in this collocation, the meaning is completely different as it means a place of doom. Furthermore, the word *البوار* in Arabic means *destruction* or *loss*, but Yusof Ali tries to convey the idiomatic meaning by using the word *perdition*, which means a state of eternal punishment and damnation into which a sinful person passes after death (Perdition, 2005).

In one hand, Yusof Ali is the only translator who was able to render the idiomatic meaning of this collocation by using a cultural equivalent according to the Christian Theology, i.e. Perdition. On the other hand, Hilali and Khan and Pickthall fail to illustrate this meaning in their translations. The best way to convey such collocation is to provide the idiomatic meaning between brackets.

Example 3:

(وحافظوا على الصلوات والصلوة الوسطى وقوموا لله قانتين) (البقرة 238)

Translation:

Hilali & Khan: The middle Salat (i.e. the best prayer – 'Asr) (the Cow 238)

Yusof Ali: the Middle Prayer (the Cow 238)

Pickthall: the midmost prayer (the Cow 238)

In this regard, Qutb (2004) mentions that the collocation “middle prayer” in this verse refers to the “Asr” which is the third prayer for Muslims. By referring to the translations, it is clear that the three translators use the strategy of literal translation and translated it into “middle prayer”. Another point that can be discussed is Pickthall’s translation when he uses *Midmost*. Oxford dictionary defines the word *midmost* as “in the very middle”. This indicates that Pickthall tries to refer to the idiomatic meaning of this collocation. However, he fails to illustrate this meaning to the reader. The word “*midmost*” indicates the time of this prayer and does not define it.

Hilali and Khan use a mix strategy in their translation when they use the word *Salat*. This word was translated based on the transcription strategy. Newmark (1988) says that “This strategy relates to the conversion of different alphabets of a word in the source text to the equivalent alphabets in the target text” (p. 81). They keep the Arabic word صلاة as the same in the translation. This strategy is used because the word is already known to any Muslim reader or even to non-Muslim reader. Based on the interpretation of the meaning of this collocation by Qutb (2004), the meaning of this collocation is the prayer of Asr. The only translators who render the idiomatic meaning of this collocation are Hilali and Khan. On the other hand, Hilali and Khan also give more explanation about this prayer by describing it “the best prayer”. This meaning is semantically included in this collocation.

Example 4:

(وهو الذي سخر البحر لتأكلوا منه لحما طريا وتستخرجوا منه حلية تلبسونها) (النحل 14)

Translation:

Hilali & Khan: Fresh tender meat (i.e. fish) (the Bee, 14)

Yusuf Ali: flesh that is fresh and tender (the Bee, 14)

Pickthall: fresh meat (the Bee, 14)

The fresh and tender meat in this verse refers to the fish. Qutb (2004) comments that “The sea and its life forms also meet many human needs and satisfy various human desires. From it we obtain fresh fish and other species to eat” (p. 14). The meaning of this collocation may be already included in this verse as the meat that is extracted from the sea is the fish. However, this collocation has a rhetorical function in this verse as Allah does not mention it directly. The job of the translator is to convey this rhetorical function by translating the collocation and giving the meaning. Otherwise, the reader may be confused with the meaning of this meat.

The three translations show the lack of equivalence in English to give a direct meaning of it. The translators use a different strategy to illustrate the meaning. The first translation is the only one that includes the idiomatic meaning of this collocation, i.e. “fish”. However, the translators fail to find an equivalent collocation in the TL to translate this collocation. They use the strategy of descriptive equivalent to convey the meaning of this collocation. The second translation by Yusuf Ali is a descriptive strategy as well, but again he uses the word flesh, which gives a different meaning of the word لحم (literally: meat). The last translation, by Pikhthall, shows the weakness of translation by using literal translation without referring to the idiomatic meaning of this collocation. Therefore, we can say that the

best translation of this collocation is the one by Hilali and Khan. However, they also fail to translate this collocation into a collocation in the TL.

Example 5:

(ما كان لي من علم بالملا الأعلى اذ يختصمون) (ص 69)

Translation:

Hilali & Khan: Chiefs on high (angels) (Sadd, 69)

Yusof Ali: Chiefs on High (Sadd, 69)

Pickthall: the highest Chiefs (Sadd, 69)

No one can deny the creatures in the heaven i.e. “angels”. This concept may be clear especially in the religious texts. Readers of religious texts like to receive a clear message when they read or listen to religious texts. A specialist in the Quran may have the ability to understand such collocations without looking for the meaning, but a reader from other cultures looks for clear translation that may help in understanding religious points. This collocation refers to God's creations in the sky i.e. the angels.

The three translators use the word “chiefs” to refer to the creatures in heaven. They use the descriptive equivalent strategy to render the meaning of this collocation in one hand. On the other hand, they fail to translate this collocation into an equivalent collocation in the TL. This problem is due to the fact that translating collocation is more problematic when the meaning of the word's combination is different from the literal meaning of the components. Accordingly, the only translation that conveys this idiomatic meaning is the first one by Hilali and Khan.

Example 6:

(والسما ذات البروج، واليوم الموعود) (البروج 1-2)

Translation:

Hilali & Khan: By the heaven, holding the big stars (1) And by the Promised Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) (Alburuj, 1-2)

Yusof Ali: By the sky, (displaying) the Zodiacal Signs, by the promised Day (of Judgment) (Alburuj, 1-2)

Pickthall: By the heaven, holding mansions of the stars, And by the Promised Day. (Alburuj, 1-2)

Quran is full of such collocations that have a hidden meaning. This feature is a rhetorical feature of the Quran that encourages the readers to think of its meanings. In this verse, Allah swears by the sky itself, then by the promised day. However, the exact meaning of this day is not clear since Muslims have many important days like Eids, Ramadan, Arafat, Hajj and others. As Qutb (2004) says “The sūrah starts with an oath: “In this way the sūrah links heaven and its magnificent constellations, the promised Day of Judgement and its great events” (p. 103).

Thus, the idiomatic meaning of this day is “the Judgment day”. The three translators translate this verse literally as “the promised day”. However, Hilali & Khan clarify this idiomatic meaning by adding its meaning between brackets “the day of Resurrection” to make it easy for the readers to understand this meaning.

Yousef Ali also adds the meaning of this idiomatic meaning between brackets “the Judgment day” which enables the readers to connect the meaning of this verse to the pre and post verses. On the other hand, Pickthall fails in rendering the idiomatic meaning of this collocation and leaves it hidden. Accordingly, it can be stated that Hilali & Khan and Yousef Ali render the meaning of this collocation equivalently by adding interpretation between brackets.

Example 7:

(والفجر، وليال عشر) (الفجر 1-2)

Translation:

Hilali & Khan: By the dawn; (1) By the ten nights (i.e. the first ten days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah) (Alfajr, 1-2)

Yusuf Ali: By the break of Day, By the Nights twice five; (Alfajr, 1-2)

Pickthall: By the Dawn, and ten nights (Alfajr, 1-2)

The ten nights in this verse refer to the first ten nights of the Arabic month Dhul -Hijjah. They are blessed days because they have the day of Arafat and the days of Haj worship in Islam. The meaning of this collocation is difficult even for Muslim - Arab readers if they are not aware of the Quranic meaning. A reader may wonder which ten days Allah means in this verse. In this regard, Qutb (2004) states that “The Qur’ān does not specify which these ten nights are. Several explanations, however, have been advanced. Some say they are the first of the month of Dhu’l-Hijjah” (p. 149).

The translations of this verse show the difficulty of rendering the meaning because the source text collocation is idiomatic. The translations of Yusuf Ali and Pickthall only show the literal meaning of this collocation which is *the ten days*. Hilali and Khan illustrate the meaning of this collocation by explaining the meaning between brackets.

Conclusion

In this paper, the researchers attempt to discuss one of the most important problems that translators may face when translating the Quranic collocation into English. The problem refers to the collocations that carry an idiomatic meaning. The researchers find that it is not easy to overcome this problem if the translators are not aware of understanding the message of the SL collocation and its linguistic, idiomatic and cultural dimensions. Translators of Quranic text have to pay more attention to collocations; especially those that carry an idiomatic meaning. They have to find the meaning of such collocation by referring to the interpretation of the Noble Quran, then choosing the convenient strategy that covers this idiomatic meaning. Meaning of such collocation may not be conveyed by using the literal strategy due to the intended meaning they have (Aresta, 2018). Therefore, the researchers suggest that the translators should support their translations by functional information or explanation such as in Hilali & Khan's translation. Such a method will save the channel of communication between the source text and the target reader in one hand. On the other hand, it will convey the message of the

Quran clearly to the target readers. However, a translator has to be aware of the semantic and beautiful features of the Quranic text such as ambiguity by committing to the Quranic text as possible as he can, in addition to the cultural aspects that a collocation may have (Obeidat & Mahadi, 2019).

To solve such a problem of idiomatic meaning, translators need to rely more on special dictionaries of Quranic texts. For this purpose, the study recommends investigating more all of the idiomatic expressions in the Quran and to collect them in such a special dictionary. Translators also need to investigate more the meaning of the collocation based on its contexts by referring to the interpretations of the Noble Quran. Collocations can be found under several categories within a text, such as lexical, grammatical or cultural collocations. This study was limited to discuss the problem of translating idiomatic collocations in the Noble Quran. Further researches may be conducted to discuss more this concept in different aspects. The result gained from this study will contribute to the fields of the problems of the Quranic expressions translation.

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