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# CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATORS DURING TANSLATEING QUR'ANIC MEANINGS OF FEMININE RELATED EXPRESSIONS AS PRESNTED IN SURAT AN-NISA

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## ABSTRACT

*The present study aims to examine the problematic cases of feminine expressions from Surat An-Nisa and their translation into English by John Medows Rodwell, Muhammad Al-Hilali and Khan, and Muhammad AlKhuli. The researcher selected Zawj(زوج) , Ma Malakat Aymanukum(ما ملكت أيمانكم) , Muhsanat(محصنات) , Allaati Yatin Alfahisha(اللاتي يأتين الفاحشة) , Qanitat(قانتات) , and Hafizat Lilghayb (حافظات للغيب) as her sample to achieve the goals of the study. Adopting a descriptive, comparative, and analytical method, the researcher analyzed and compared the translations performed by the three translators. Results revealed several problems in the translation of feminine expressions such as failure to render the intended meaning of the original words and lack of understanding the original text. The overall analysis of the three selected translations indicates that the translators committed some language errors for several reasons such as lack of understanding the connotative meaning of certain words, and the inability of some translators to distinguish between the surface meaning and the deep one.*

**Keywords:** Translation, Feminine expressions, Surat An-Nisa, Arabic-English

## INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an was originally revealed in Arabic and was later on translated into more than 114 languages. An-Nabulsi (2005) says that the translation of the Holy Qur'an is necessary .More than 70% of the world's Muslim population does not speak Arabic.  According to An-Nabulsi, the translation of the Holy Qur'an started during the life of Prophet Muhammad Peace Be upon Him (hereafter, P.B.U.H) (570 AD – 632 AD). He also states that the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad P.B.U.H paid great attention to the role of translation in conveying the teachings of Islam to non-Arabic speakers such as Jews, Romans, and Persian.  Muhammad P.B.U.H ordered Zaid Bin Thabet to learn the Syriac language to help spread Islam to other nations. Baker and Malmkaer (1998) remark that the process of translation in Baytul-Hikmah Baghdad, played an important role during the Abbasid period. Ibn Na'ima Al-Himsi and Yuhanna Ibn Al-Batriq adopted the techniques of literal translation for the purposes of translating Greek texts into Arabic, while translators such as Al-Jawahri and Ibn Ishaq adopted free translation methods.

Baker and Malmkaer (1998) mention that the spread of Islam created the need for creating an accurate and precise translation of the meanings of the Qur'an to help non-Arabs learn and understand the Qur'an. The first attempt to translate the Qur'an was during the seventh century by Salman Al Farsi who provided a translation into Persian.  During the tenth and twelfth centuries, Persian Islamic researchers completed the Qur'an translations into Persian. The Qur'an which means "the recitation", was orally revealed by Allah to the Last Prophet of Islam, Muhammad P.B.U.H. during the period 609 AD – 632 AD. The Holy Qur'an has the feature of having a multi-layered and complex language that makes the translation process more challenging.

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The Qur'an is the central religious text of Islam, and with languages constantly evolving and new words being added all the time, it is not always easy to find equivalent terms in other languages. During the last few centuries several translators introduced various translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an, but not all of them were considered accurate translations due to the unsuitable translation techniques which were adopted by the translators or due to not being able to render the accurate meaning. This led to a distortion of the intended meanings, either deliberately or unintentionally. For instance, the word "you" in English can have multiple meanings in the Qur'anic Arabic "أنتِ" "أنتَ" "أنتم" (anta, ante, 'antum) …etc. If this is the case with a simple pronoun, one can only imagine the difficulties inherent in translating more complex words. Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) believe that most of the concepts in religious texts especially in the Qur'an hold unique linguistic and semantic features that are culturally specific and have no equivalent in the target language. They are untranslatable, for example, the expression "Salat Al-Istikharah "صلاة الاستخارة" (It is the last step in the process of decision-making by seeking guidance and blessings from Allah).

Translating religious texts is becoming more important as the world is becoming a global village and the interaction between people and their cultures is increasing. This increases the need for more adequate translation taking into consideration accuracy as one of the most important criterion. Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997:3) define "Accuracy" as being an evaluation of the extent to which a translated word or phrase matches the original text.

## Statement of the Problem

The translation of the Qur'an has always been a challenging issue in Islamic theology because some words may have a range of meanings. The context should be taken into consideration in order to produce an accurate translation. The sacred and miraculous book, The Holy Qur'an is written in classical Arabic and thus has a term on its own namely, the Qur'anic language. This causes a lack in the equivalent terms in the target language, which may add more complications in the translation process. It is highly important to achieve an accurate translation because the Qur'an is the central religious book of Islam. El-Hadary (2008) notes that many Qur'anic translations focus on the meaning of the context and far from the free or literal translation method. Despite that, some of these translations contradict the original text and are unclear and incomprehensible.

## Objective and Question of the Study

This study aims to identify the challenges that professional translators of the Qur'an encounter when they translate female-related words and expressions as presented in Surat An-Nisa.

This study raised the following research question:

What are some of the translation challenges that professional translators of the Qur'an encounter when they translate three selected translations of female-related words and expressions as presented in Surat An-Nisa?

## Significance of the Study

Generally, one of the challenges the translators may face in translating any expressive text is the lack of equivalent terms, either it is literary texts or religious. Each field has its way of dealing with the challenges. This study will benefit some current and future translators who deal with religious text in general and the translators of the Qur'an in particular. It clarifies the challenges encountered in the three selected translations of the female-related expressions and words as presented in Surat An-Nisa. The results of this study can also help benefit researchers, translators, and any individual who is interested in the translation of religious

texts., It may have an effect on non-Arabic Muslim speakers especially women through helping them to understand the selected sample well. Although, the number of studies which examine the Qur'anic translations already exist, it is rare to find specific translation studies related to female-related expressions. To the best knowledge of the researcher, this is the first study conducted on this topic. Therefore, this study will help fill the gap in the review of related literature.

## Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study may not be generalized to all existing translations of the women-related expressions found in the Qur'an. They are limited to the translations done by John Medows Rodwell, Muhammad Al-Khuli, and the collaborative effort made by Muhammad Al-Hilali and Mohammad Khan. These findings are limited to some expressions that were selected from Surat An-Nisa only. The study was conducted in Amman, Jordan during the academic year of 2019-2020 in the second semester.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section consists of theoretical and empirical studies related to the challenges that translators encounter in translating religious texts, particularly translating the Qur'an. First, the theoretical studies aim at providing information regarding translating religious texts, including its difficulties. Second, it includes the empirical studies that deal with the challenges which occur in religious texts and Qur'anic translation.

### Theoretical Literature Related to the Religious Texts and the Qur'anic Translations

A number of scholars have examined the challenges and problems encountered by the translators in translating religious texts, such as Al-Abdullatif (2018), Agliz (2015), Elewa (2014), As-Safi (2011), and Abdul-Raof (2001).

Al-Abdullatif (2018, p. 212) believes that any sacred text tends to lose its meaning when interpreted outside its sacred context. Our understanding of it will remain practiced. He believes that the translation itself results from the translators and not a reflection of the source text. He maintains that the Qur'an is Islam's guidelines to Muslims holding universal message through a particular Arabic dialect. He examines the untranslatability of the Qur'an, arguing that the untranslatability of the Qur'an is a matter of equivalence. Most Muslim scholars reject the Qur'anic translations of Al-Roomy's attempt to translate the Qur'an because translating the Qur'an is a more complex matter; accuracy and faithfulness in translating its form and content are crucial for successful religious translation. Al-Abdullatif gives several reasons for the criticism levelled against some Qur'anic translations. Literal translation of the Qur'an or 'sense for sense' or translating according to the translator's understanding is not without risk. He concludes by saying that "The Qur'an may remain forever open to new interpretations; its meanings or significations will never reveal themselves to any single reading." (p.222).

Agliz (2015) agrees with the view that says religious texts are very difficult to translate. To produce an appropriate and accurate translation, translators must take into consideration equivalence at the level of the word, the sentence and the text. Equivalence at the level of the word and grammar is the main problem that a translator encounters in translating religious texts.

These translations are far from the Qur'anic text. However, Non-Muslim translators treat the Qur'an as a non-holy plain text or literary text and restrict its meanings to foreign meanings and concepts far from the Qur'anic meanings and concepts.

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Elewa (2014) maintains that other distinctive linguistic features of the religious text are the specialized lexical items. In the Holy Qur'an, for instance, a large number of names and attributes of Allah are mentioned in the Qur'an, "Almighty, عز وجل" "the Merciful, الرحيم"…etc. Although words are easily rendered into another language, the functional equivalence of Qur'anic terms is not always easy to achieve. Elewa also divides Islamic lexical items into three categories. First, terms which are used only in the Islamic context and are unknown to translators such as Aldhihar (Claiming one's wife is sexually impermissible). Second, terms which are used in non-Islamic context and are known to translators, are used in a specialized way in the source text, such as AlFat-h (Liberation). Third, Islamic terms that are used in both Islamic contexts and non-religious contexts so, they are known to translators such as AlHajb (Exclude some relatives from inheritance). Arabic religious discourse is considered formal because it is given in a classical style and it is based on sacred scriptures. In English, the discourse becomes more formal depending on the importance of the situation. The formal in Arabic could be informal in English and vice versa. Elewa argues it is possible to produce a target text which can be equivalent to the source texts. He believes that translators must truly comprehend the source text and attempt to transfer it faithfully and accurately into the target language, without any addition or deletion. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of being precise, accurate, typical, natural and consistent.

Moreover As-Safi (2011) asserts that translation loss is very common and diversified. The use of an old or abandoned language may cause inconsistency when the translator uses it alongside contemporary language. Sometimes translators use literal translation, out of faithfulness, without explanations or commentaries when they cannot find. Sometimes it is inevitable and vice versa avertable loss. The more meticulously and perfect the text, the more losses are expected to occur in its translations. As is the case with a large number of translations of the Holy Qur'an, English and Arabic belong to remote origins. This leads to more losses in transferring between these two languages. Hence the translation process is sometimes tied up by many barriers mainly cultural barriers that create inevitable losses especially in dealing with religious texts like the Qur'an. In addition to that, Abdul-Raof (2001) believes in the ultimate untranslatability of the Qur'an by saying "... the thrilling Qur'anic rhythms and acoustics that touch the very core of the source text reader's heart cannot be induced in the target text." (p.182). He adds that it is impossible to achieve full translation equivalence and translators cannot change the motives in the Qur'anic method without losing influence. Translators must do their best to keep such devices in the target text. The style and tone must also be maintained in the target text as if the target text was originally written to the target audience. Additionally, he recommends using explanatory translation. In other words, this methodology aims to translate highly fortified texts through either exegetical materials or through commentaries and marginal notes, within the text, to make explicit the sophisticated multi-layered meanings. He believes that since words have different meanings in different cultural contexts, cultural transposition should be the translation hub rather than literalness. The untranslatability is reflected in the form (which is the key to the Qur'anic message), structure, style, word order and flow of sounds. The Qur'an cannot be translatable because of the revelation's cultural connotations.

**Empirical Studies Related to Translating Qur'anic Texts**

This part of the research tackles the empirical studies related to Qur'anic translation. The investigation was studied by researchers and scholars, including Alaro (2007), Dweik and Abu-Shakra (2010), Ashaer (2013), Amoori (2017), and Abdelaal (2019).

Alaro (2007) selected four translations of the Qur'an to examine how they differ in the selected translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an. He noted the important and

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essential task of the translators is to familiarize themselves with the subject they are dealing with before translating any text. This note is more crucial when translating the Qur'an. Alaro used the comparative inductive method by selecting various terms from the Qur'an and listing their translations (two in English: The Noble Qur'an by Irving and The Meaning of the Glorious Koran by Pickthall and two in Yoruba: Al-Kurani Ti A Tum ọ si Ede Yoruba, and Al-Kurani Ọrọ Abẹmi Tootọ). Alaro found that a translator's linguistic ability was not sufficient to translate the meanings of the Qur'an and the failure to understand the terms and expressions caused errors in the translations. These errors led to the misinterpretations and distortions of the meanings, whether the translator was aware of it or not. He concluded that there are things that should be taken into consideration in religious translation such as:

1. The translators must base their translations on specialized books, in Islamic terminologies, dictionaries, and lexicons.

2. The translator must be committed to the Islamic terminologies and expressions and avoid other religions' terminologies and expressions.

3. Translators also must be committed to the unity in translating repeated Qur'anic words unless their meaning varies according to the context.

4. The meanings must be transferred directly from the Qur'an to the target language and not from another intermediate language.

5. It is forbidden to translate the Qur'anic texts literally because it is the word of Allah, unless a word or a term does not have an equivalent and the translator should add explanations in parenthesis or in footnotes or in appendices.

Dweik and Abu-Shakra (2010) examined the problems encountered by translators in translating some cultural collocations in three religious sources, namely the Holy Qur'an, the Hadith, and the Bible. The study concluded that translators should be fully versed in the translation of religious texts, especially in terms of lexical and metaphorical collocations. The differences between Arabic terms and beliefs as well as the Western ones should be understood. Literal translation should be resisted by taking the meaning of the context into account.

Ashaer (2013) analyzed three English translations of Surat Yusuf from a semantic and pragmatic perspective. The researcher concluded that translators must be highly knowledgeable in the shades of the semantic meaning of the Qur'anic words. This can be achieved through knowledge of Arabic rhetorical devices such as gender, recurrence, definiteness and indefiniteness, tense, word order, ellipses, foregrounding and backgrounding, and number, and by knowing the semantic meaning of the words in the context of occurrence. He concluded that

1. Translators must not add any foreign words while translating the Qur'an because it may cause losses in the target text, such as the use of the Biblical name Joseph instead of Yusuf. This process is called domestication and this method is referred to as called cultural transplantation.

2. Translators must refer to the Qur'an exegeses which can help other Qur'an translators to comprehend the exact meaning.

3. Translating Qur'anic words cannot be achieved through the use of single lexical items (one-to-one) because they are usually loaded with meaning.

4. Consistency is a condition that translators must have. Being consistent means being aware of the whole text.

5. Understanding the whole text as one unit and not dividing it into isolated parts leads to the right interpretations and the level of accuracy will be higher.

Amoori (2017) discussed in his thesis the problems and strategies of translating 'Zakat' and some of its terms. The researcher used descriptive comparative analytical methods. He selected five translations of five Hadith collections of 'Zakat' terms to be examined to discover the problems and strategies adopted he found. The translators resorted to literal translation because 'Zakat' terms do not have equivalences in the target language. This caused serious problems in their translation. The results present loss in preserving the function of the original terms which led to loss in the meanings, caused by ignoring the context. He found out that deletion or under translation is an inadequate strategy in translating religious texts. Amoori also suggested the following to solve these problems:

1. Footnotes and explanations help to make the target text more comprehensible to the readers.

2. Transliteration can maintain the connotations and features of the source text in the target text.

3. Literal translation must be avoided in translation especially religious text.

4. Deletion in translating religious texts is totally rejected because it conceals an essential detail from the readers of the target texts.

Abdelaal (2019) investigated the problem of translating denotative meaning in the Holy Qur'an in five verses. The study aimed at finding the extent of losing the denotative meaning that occurs in the translation of the Holy Qur'an, and the causes of the difficulty in conveying certain denotative meanings in the translation of the Holy Qur'an. The sample of his study, which consisted of five verses from Surat Al-Anaam, was purposefully chosen. The results of the study showed that the loss of denotative meaning happened because of the lack of equivalence in the TL which came from the cultural differences between TL and SL and because of the translation strategies adopted by the two translators.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is a comparative qualitative research based on the analytical descriptive method due to the complex nature of the religious language in the Holy Qur'an. This study analyses certain women-related expressions in the three selected translations including explanatory meanings of the Holy Qur'an. It is especially important because some translations have focused on the connotative, rather than the denotative meaning and vice versa. The study aims to examine three professional Qur'anic translations and to identify the translators' problems in translating the selected expressions.

 The selected three translations are listed below:

   i.   The Qur'an by J. M. Rodwell, is first published in 1861.
   ii.  The translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language by Muhammad Al-Hilali and Muhammad Khan in 1417 AH.
   iii. The Holy Qur'an and the Translation of Its Meanings into English by Muhammad AlKhuli in 2019.

**Sample of the Study**

The sample of the study consists of six expressions from four verses in Surat An-Nisa, which are 'Zawj' "زوج", 'Al-Muhsanat' "المحصنات", 'Ma Malakat Aymanukum' "ما ملكت أيمانكم" , 'Hafizat Lilghayb' " حافظات and 'Qanitat' "قانتات",'Allaati Yatin Al-Fahisha' "اللاتي يأتين الفاحشة"

"اللغيب". The three translations include Rodwell's The Koran, Al-Hilali and Khan's Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language, and AlKhuli's The Holy Qur'an and Translation of Meanings into English.

The Three Translations as Presented by the Three Translators

The translations of the selected expressions in their respective verses are presented below. They will be analyzed and discussed comparatively in the next section for the purpose of identifying these problems.

1.      Verse 1 includes the word 'zawj' "زَوْجَ".

" يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱتَّقُواْ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَٰحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَآءًۚ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ ٱلَّذِي تَسَآءَلُونَ بِهِۦ وَٱلْأَرْحَامَۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا "

Rodwell's translation:

"O MEN! fear your Lord, who hath created you of one man (nafs, soul), and of him created his wife, and from these twain hath spread abroad so many men and 'WOMEN. …" P.528.

Al-Hilali and Khan's translation:

"O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawaa (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women; …" P.106.

AlKhuli's translation:

"O people! Fear your Lord, Who created you from one person [i.e., Adam], and Who created from him his wife [i.e., Eve]. And He has created from them both many men and women. …" P.110.

2.      Verse 25 includes three expressions which are 'Al-Muhsanat' "المحصنات", 'Ma Malakat Aymanukum' "ما ملكت أيمانكم" , 'Yatin Al-Fahisha' " يأتين الفاحشة ".

" وَمَن لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنكُمْ طَوْلًا أَن يَنكِحَ ٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ فَمِن مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَٰنُكُم مِّن فَتَيَٰتِكُمُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِۚ وَٱللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَٰنِكُمۚ بَعْضُكُم مِّنۢ بَعْضٍۚ فَٱنكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ وَءَاتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ مُحْصَنَٰتٍ غَيْرَ مُسَٰفِحَٰتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَٰتِ أَخْدَانٍۚ فَإِذَآ أُحْصِنَّ فَإِنْ أَتَيْنَ بِفَٰحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى ٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتِ مِنَ ٱلْعَذَابِۚ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ ٱلْعَنَتَ مِنكُمْۚ وَأَن تَصْبِرُواْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ "

Rodwell's translation:

"And whoever of you is not rich enough to marry free believing women, then let him marry such of your believing maidens as have fallen into your hands as slaves; God well knoweth your faith. Ye are sprung the one from the other. Marry them, then, with the leave of their masters, and give them a fair dower: but let them be chaste and free from fornication, and not entertainers of lovers. If after marriage they commit adultery, then inflict upon them half the penalty enacted for free married women. ..." P.533.

Al-Hilali and Khan's translation:

"And whoever of you have not the means wherewith to wed free, believing women, they may wed believing girls from among those (slaves) whom your right hands possess, and Allah has full knowledge about your faith; you are one from another. Wed them with permission of their own folk (guardians, Auliya or masters) and give them their Mahr according to whet is reasonable; they (the above said captive and slave-girls) should be chaste not committing illegal sex, nor taking boy-friends. And after they have been taken in wedlock, if they commit illegal sexual intercourse, their punishment is half that for free (unmarried) women. …" P.111.

AlKhuli's translation:

"And whoever of you does not have the means to marry a chaste believing women, he may marry a believing girl possessed by others. And Allah knows your faith well. Marry them [i.e., slave-girls, not anymore now] with their guardian's permission, and give them their reasonable dowries, provided that they are chaste, not given to fornication or taking boy-friends. If they commit adultery after their marriage, their penalty is half the penalty of a free unmarried woman.…" P.117.

3.      Verse 15 includes the expressions

" وَٱلَّـٰتِي يَأْتِينَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةَ مِن نِّسَآئِكُمْ فَٱسْتَشْهِدُوا۟ عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنكُمْ ۖ فَإِن شَهِدُوا۟ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِى ٱلْبُيُوتِ حَتَّىٰ يَتَوَفَّىٰهُنَّ ٱلْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ ٱللَّهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا "

Rodwell's translation:

"If any of your women be guilty of whoredom, then bring four witnesses against them from among yourselves; and if they bear witness to the fact, shut them up within their houses till death release them,1 or God make some way for them." P.531.

Al-Hilali and Khan's translation:

"And those of your women who commit illegal sexual intercourse, take the evidence of four witnesses from amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them (i.e. women) to houses until death comes to them or Allah ordains for them some (other) way" P.109.

AlKhuli's translation:

"As for those of your women who commit illegal sexual intercourse, ask for the evidence of four [reliable] witnesses. If they testify against them, hold them to their homes until they die or [until] Allah ordains for them [another] way." P.113-114.

4.      Verse 34:

" ٱلرِّجَالُ قَوَّٰمُونَ عَلَى ٱلنِّسَآءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَآ أَنفَقُوا۟ مِنْ أَمْوَٰلِهِمْ ۚ فَٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتُ قَٰنِتَٰتٌ حَٰفِظَٰتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ وَٱلَّٰتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَٱهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِى ٱلْمَضَاجِعِ وَٱضْرِبُوهُنَّ ۖ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا۟ عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيرًا "

Rodwell's translation:

"Men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God hath gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them. Virtuous women are obedient, careful, during the husband's absence, because God hath of them been careful. …" p. 534.

Al-Hilali and Khan's translation:

"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands), and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property). …" P. 113.

AlKhuli's translation:

"Men are the protectors of women because Allah has preferred some to some [in strength] and because men spend from their means [in maintaining women]. Thus, pious women are obedient [to Allah and their husbands] and guard, in their husband's absence, what Allah orders them to guard [i.e., their chastity and the husband's house and property]. …" P.119.

In the following section, I compare, analyze, and discuss the three translations in terms of the problems of translating these expressions.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This paper sought to answer the following question:

What are some of the translation challenges that professional translators encounter when they translate three selected translations related to female words and expressions as presented in Surat An-Nisa?

'Zawj' 'زوج'

Many lexicologists have compiled various dictionaries which contain numerous terminologies. Each word has several meanings according to its roots, context, and part of speech. According to Arar (2017: 232) the word 'زوج' Zawj occurred in the Holy Qur'an a total of seventeen times, four of which are not relevant to the goals of this research. In the remaining thirteen times, the word has multiple meanings according to their multiple contexts and themes. In Al-Wasit dictionary (2009) Zawj 'زوج' is derived from the root 'ز و ج' which means a man or a woman's life partner. Abdul-Rahman (2007: 3) remarks that Allah begins this Surah by ordering people to fear their Lord for He created them from one soul " ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَٰحِدَةٍ" which means Adam "وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا" and created his wife (Eve) from it (the soul i.e. Adam). In this section, after each verse and translation, exegesis will be included for the purpose of further clarification and explanation.

In verse 1, the five exegeses (Al-Qurtubi 1985:2, Al-Saadi 2007:124, Ibn-Katheer 2013:270, Baghaway 1986, and Al-Tabari 1986:149), Arar (2017:234), and Abdul-Rahman (2007: 3) concur that the word Zawj denotes 'spouse', but connotes 'Eve'.

The word (Zawj) refers to male or female partner/spouse. Furthermore, it has multiple meaning according to the context and subject matter. Translators are, therefore, required to pay attention to the semantic and contextual dimensions of this verse. The word (Zawj) in this verse refers to female partners in general, but more specifically refers to Eve. Rodwell was not able to capture the meaning of Zawj correctly in this context in his translation.

The results indicate that Rodwell adopted the literal translation method for the word Zawj which failed to give the intended meaning in verse (1). Such finding agrees with the studies of As-Safi who believed that non-Islamic ideology may cause misinterpretation and translation error as in the case of Rodwell's translation. Al-Hilali and Khan and AlKhuli opted to add the cultural explanation along with the literal translation. This helped to give the connotation of the word Zawj. Their addition was essential to deliver the intended meaning in contrast to Rodwell's literal translation which deviated from the meaning of the verse. Al-Hilali and Khan's translation is the most precise in comparison with the two other translations.

This was according to the translators' strategies, while the problems the researcher found that the translations of these verses require a radical comprehension of its context, especially the understanding of the pre-expression (Nafs wahida) (one soul) and its connotative meaning refers to Adam, peace be upon him. Verse (1) is about the early universe of mankind during Adam and Eve. The word Zawj indirectly indicates Eve. While the word Zawj in verse (20) refers to any female spouse. Due to Rodwell's lack of understanding of the noble verse, he translated the word Zawj literally and did not mention its connotation. While Al-Hilali and Khan and AlKhuli used literal translation, Al-Hilali and Khan added the cultural equivalent in English and Arabic. AlKhuli added the cultural equivalent meaning in English only. This confirms what Abdul-Raouf (2001) referred to by saying that there is no way to translate the meanings of the Qur'an without adding explanations, and annotations. Also, Alaro (2007)

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and As-Safi (2011) highly recommended translating the Qur'anic words that have no English equivalents through adding explanations and footnotes. The literal translation method is quite an unadvisable method in translating such content and religious texts. This method will produce only the surface meaning of such divine miraculous book. As mentioned before, the same word in different verses has a completely different meaning.

'Al-Muhsanat' 'المحصنات'

The expression 'Al-Muhsanat' is a hypernym. Cambridge Dictionary (1999) defines hypernym as "a word whose meaning includes a group of other words".

The word 'المحصنات' Al-Muhsanat is mentioned two times and once as a verb. Most Muslim scholars including the five exegeses, Qutb (2003: 626-630), and Asha'rawi (n. d.) agreed upon the following interpretation:

1-   "وَمَن لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنكُمْ طَوْلًا أَن يَنكِحَ ٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ فَمِن مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَٰنُكُم مِّن فَتَيَٰتِكُمُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ "

The translation of the word Muhsanat may be 'free women', 'Muslim women', 'chaste women', or 'married women'. In this part of this verse, it means 'free women' because in the previous verse it was stated that it is forbidden to marry a woman who is already married. As such, the verse cannot contradict the provision in the previous one. Therefore, the intended meaning is not 'married women' or 'chaste' ones because it includes both free and slave girls (Asha'arwi, n.d)

The three translators attained accuracy and equivalence in translating Muhsanat as chaste.

2-   "فَإِذَآ أُحْصِنَّ فَإِنْ أَتَيْنَ بِفَٰحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى ٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتِ مِنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ "

If those slave girls get married or convert to Islam and commit adultery or fornication, their punishment is half punishment of the free unmarried women because if a married woman commits adultery her punishment is stoning to death. Such punishment cannot be halved.

Al-Qortoby (1985:143), Al-Tabari (1986:14), Baghaway, Al-Saadi, and Arar (2017:140) believe that "فَإِذَآ أُحْصِنَّ" has two correct meanings depending on how the reader approaches the text. The first meaning relates to female slaves who get married. The second relates to female slaves who convert to Islam. Al-Qortoby, Al-Tabari, and Baghaway remark that Hamza, Al-Kisae, and Asem (readers of the Qur'an) read it أحصن which means converted to Islam and the rest of the readers read it أحصن which means they got married. The change is in the Arabic diacritic of the first letter.

Rodwell translated the verb أحصن "after marriage", Hilali and Khan's is "have been taken in wedlock.", and AlKhuli's is "after their marriage". The three translators have the same content but in a different form. From the analysis above, it can be understood from the translations by Rodwell and AlKhuli that they followed the second one of the readings. This cannot be accepted out of faithfulness. In Arabic, the diacritics help to show the difference but English translators must explain that this holds two correct meanings.

Rodwell distorted the intended meaning when he translated Al-Muhsanat as "free married women". The researcher cannot turn a blind eye to this fatal error. Hilali and Khan's translation is better than AlKhuli's for they sustain the plural form in their translation.

In verse (25), all three translators committed a translation error in the meanings of this verse. Rodwell made a fatal error in translating Al-Muhsanat at the end of this verse due to the miscomprehension of the context. This mistake distorted the provision. AlKhuli had mistaken in translating Al-Muhsanat (the first one) by saying they are the (chaste). This translation may confuse the reader because chaste includes the free and slave girls. He selected the wrong shade of meaning regarding the context. Rodwell and Al-Hilali and Khan

misinterpreted Ma Malakat Aymanukum because they misunderstood the connotative meaning of this phrase. Rodwell and AlKhuli ignored the difference found in the readers of the Holy Qur'an in reading "فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَّ" which also changes the meaning. It must be said that the three translators concentrated on one interpretation of "فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَّ". This agrees with Amoori (2017)'s and Al-Rubaii (2013)'s results that the Islamic background and the prior knowledge of the Islamic laws plays a great role in translating Islamic texts. The translators need to have a prior background of Islamic history and laws to provide equivalent translation and clear explanations.

'Ma Malakat Aymanukum'

This expression is considered a euphemism phrase and 'Ma Malakat' 'Aymanukum. Cambridge Dictionary (1999) defines euphemism as ''a word or phrase used to avoid saying an unpleasant or offensive word''. The phrase 'ما ملكت أيمانكم' Ma Malakat 'Aymanukum is a phrase that can be used for both genders and requires a deep understanding of its connotations in every Qur'anic context. In the first three verses, the expression is used to refer to females (Arar, 2017:505).

"وَمَن لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنكُمْ طَوْلًا أَن يَنكِحَ ٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ فَمِن مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَٰنُكُم مِّن فَتَيَٰتِكُمُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ "

So, whoever of you (men) do not have the ability or the money to marry free women, they can marry a slave girl possessed by others. In Verse 25 the expression was explained by Asha'arwi (n. d.) as the slave girl must be possessed by others because she is already permitted to her master. But Allah the Almighty addresses people as one structural unit when He says your faith 'أيمانكم'.

Rodwell translated Ma Malakat 'Aymanukum as "your believing maidens as have fallen into your hands as slaves;".  Al-Hilali and Khan translated Ma Malakat 'Aymanukum as "believing girls from among those (slaves) whom your right hands possess,". They seemed to have chosen the inappropriate translation strategy. In translating Ma Malakat 'Aymanukum, Rodwell adopted the paraphrasing strategy and Hilali and Khan fell into the trap of literal translation. This reminds us of the recommendation made by Dweik and Abu-Shakra (2010) that literal translation should be resisted by taking the meaning of the context into account.

AlKhuli translated Ma Malakat 'Aymanukum as "believing girl possessed by others.". AlKhuli produced a good translation of the second phrase and again the inevitable loss of euphemistic feature of this phrase is found in his translation.

Ma Malakat Aymanukum is considered problematic because translating it cannot be presented without inevitable losses, as As-Safi (2011) calls it, either in the euphemistic sense (found in Rodwell's and AlKhuli's translations) or in the intended meaning (found in Al-Hilali and Khan's). Since the translations of the meanings of the Qur'an are not considered a substitute for it, in some cases it is likely that the proper contextual transferring of the meaning is more important.

Rodwell and Al-Hilali and Khan misinterpreted Ma Malakat Aymanukum because they misunderstood the connotative meaning of this phrase.

'Allaati Yatin Al-Fahisha'

The word (اللاتي) is the plural form of (التي) which is used as a female pronoun (Al-Qortoby, 1985). Arar (2017) analyzes the verb (يأتي) as people doing or committing sins by their selves intentionally. Al-Mawrid (2005) defines (يأتين) as the present tense of the verb (أتى) that means to commit and perpetrate, in this context. Al-Fahisha is a hypernym, used for euphemistic purpose, which subsumes under it every filthy action or speech the ugliest of which, at the social level and the meaning is context-dependent. The polysemy of this expression may

cause complexity in the translation process. (فحشاء) means whoredom, adultery, fornication, indecency, obscene language, (Al-Mawrid, 2005). And the word Fahisha (الفاحشة) is a synecdoche which means every offensive action or utterance (Arar, 2017) and (Al-Wasit, 2009).

Most Muslim Scholars including the five exegeses, Qutb, and Asha'arawi interpreted " وَٱلَّٰتِي يَأْتِينَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةَ مِن نِّسَآئِكُمْ" in verse 15 as any Muslim woman who commits extramarital sex. It is called Fahisha to ensure its detestability.

" وَٱلَّٰتِي يَأْتِينَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةَ مِن نِّسَآئِكُمْ فَٱسْتَشْهِدُواْ عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنكُمْ فَإِن شَهِدُواْ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي ٱلْبُيُوتِ حَتَّىٰ يَتَوَفَّىٰهُنَّ ٱلْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ ٱللَّهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا "

In this verse, Rodwell translated "وَٱلَّٰتِي يَأْتِينَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةَ" as "if any of your women be guilty of whoredom," Al-Hilali and Khan translated it as "those of your women who commit illegal sexual intercourse," and Alkhuli translated it as "those of your women who commit illegal sexual intercourse". Al-Hilali and Khan and AlKhuli are similar in using the phrase 'illegal sexual intercourse' as an equivalent to the word Al-Fahisha.

The difficulty in translating this phrase and the word Fahisha lies in the connotations and linguistic features it carries.

In verse (25), the three translators opted for the specific intended meaning but Al-Hilali and Khan's translation is more appropriate than the other two because Rodwell and AlKhuli used the word adultery. Merriam-Webster, (n. d.) differentiated between adultery and fornication as "Adultery is only used when at least one of the parties involved (either male or female) is married, whereas fornication may be used to describe two people who are unmarried (to each other or anyone else) engaging in consensual sexual intercourse". According to the analysis, the slave girls may be married or converted to Islam both are right depending on the readers of the Qur'an. Al-Hilali and Khan's translation suits the diverse views.

The translation errors were because of the inability to maintain the imagery and euphemism in the target text, and the incorrect choice of words and as well as lack of understanding which was the reason of the inability to distinguish either to generalize or specify the phrase in the target text. This is in line with the results of Alaro (2007) who found that the translator's insufficient linguistic ability led to commit errors in translating the Qur'an.

'Qanitat' 'قانتات' and 'Hafizat Lilghayb' 'حافظات للغيب'

It is worth pointing out that Rodwell's translation of the phrase "ٱلرِّجَالُ قَوَّٰمُونَ عَلَى ٱلنِّسَآءِ" as "men are superior to women" is incorrect. Asha'arawi (n. d.) explains that this verse means men have the responsibility to take care of their wives, sisters, and mothers and they serve women's interests.

Qutb remarks that Al-Qunut is devout obedience by choice not forced or compelled. And these righteous women are (حافظات للغيب) who preserve the sanctity of the sacred bond between them and their husbands in their absence. Asha'arawi, adds that this verse is an affirmation that these are the characteristics of righteous women.

The word (حفظ) Hifz in Al-Mawrid (2005) means to preserve, keep, protect, and guard. And the word (غيب) Ghayb means the invisible and unseen.

Arar (2017) points out that this description was linked to women six times in the Qur'an.

The word Qanitat 'قانتات', Rodwell translated it as "obedient", Al-Hilali and Khan translated it as "devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands)", and AlKhuli translated it as "obedient [to Allah and their husbands]". Al-Hilali and Khan's translation is more accurate and precise than the other two translators because Rodwell and AlKhuli used the word

obedient which is equivalent to the word 'مطيع' and does not express the actual connotative meaning of the word Qanitat. Al-Hilali and Khan and AlKhuli's addition "to Allah and to their husbands" helped in giving the intended meaning.

Rodwell's translation of Hafizat Lilghayb is "careful, during the husband's absence", Al-Hilali and Khan's is "guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property)", and AlKhuli's translation is "guard, in their husband's absence, what Allah orders them to guard [i.e., their chastity and the husband's house and property]". Rodwell's use of the word as equivalent to the word hafizat is far from the intended meaning and gives poor and limited meaning. Al-Hilali and Khan and AlKhuli have the same interpretation of the same lexical choices. They differ in one thing. Al-Hilali and Khan used e.g. and what came after it are examples of what women should guard while AlKhuli used i.e. and came after it are examples of what women should guard. He limited the verb guard to what he mentioned later only. So, because of this difference, Al-Hilali and Khan's translation outperformed AlKhuli's translation.

Al-Hilali and Khan seemed to be keen on delivering the exact meaning and image in their translation of word Qanitat. They adopted the functional equivalent and expansion as their translation method. In contrast with the translation of Rodwell and AlKhuli, it is inaccurate because of their literal translation. The expression Hafizat Lilghayeb needs further explanations in the translation process as in Al-Hilali and Khan's translation and in AlKuli's translation. Rodwell's translation is considered insufficient and limited.

To prevent such translation errors, the explanatory translation method must be included in the Qur'anic translation because the language of the Holy Qur'an is divinely deep, referential, and descriptive. Explanations or footnotes help the readership of the target text to grasp the meaning better. Besides, the translator must have credible Qur'anic exegesis and Arabic dictionaries.

## CONCLUSION

The current study investigated the problems that are found in translating some expressions from Surat An-Nisa by Rodwell, Al-Khuli, and al-Hilali & Khan. The overall analysis of the three selected translations indicates that the translators committed some language errors for several reasons such as lack of understanding the connotative meaning of certain words, and the inability of some translators to distinguish between the surface meaning and the deep one .Some problems are linked to the nature of religious texts which require translators to be familiar with its concepts, style and the intended meaning. Some translators lack the linguistic and cultural knowledge of Arabic which leads to distorting the text by using inaccurate equivalent terms. Some translators resorted to literal translation. By doing so, it caused them to misunderstand the intended meaning and to translate without paying attention to the context.

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