



## Islamic Arabic Vocabulary in English and Uzbek Languages, Misconceptions and difficulties in translating Arabic- Islamic borrowings from Uzbek into English Language

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**Abstract:** RESEARCH STATEMENT: This article illustrates the complexities of translating words with Arabic etymology from Uzbek into English in the process of communication. It explores the importance of accurate and careful translation of religious terms in order to facilitate the task of translators and second language learners and deal more efficiently with the challenging language aspects of specific words and expressions. It aims also to assess the difficulties and challenges of translating Arabic Islamic words into English focusing on context and meaning of words in English language.

A great number of words from Arabic language remained in Uzbek language as a legacy of the Arab conquest of Central Asia in the early 4 BC. These words present unique challenges as they have deep meanings and often times result in phrases or sentences to literally translate their definition. Therefore, the speakers of Uzbek and Tajik languages may easily understand the translation whereas, the speakers of English language may have difficulties in figuring out what exactly the words mean and in which context. Finally, the students of the English language face certain complexities translating Uzbek words into English or vice-versa while understanding their meaning and trying to at least provide accurate description of their meanings.

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**I. Introduction.** More than one billion people from a vast range of races, nationalities and cultures across the globe are united by their common Islamic faith. About 18 percent live in the Arab world but the world's largest Muslim community lives in Indonesia. Substantial parts of Asia and most of Africa are Muslim, while significant minorities are to be found in China, North and South America and Europe. Arabic is a very complex language, especially if you plan to translate your Arabic content into English, or vice versa. Arabic is classified as a member of the Semitic family of languages while English as a member of the Indo-European language family.

In the 7th century, the Arabs, led by the Caliph Abu Bakr, an associate of the Prophet Muhammad, conquered the Arabian Peninsula, the Near and Middle East, North Africa, Spain, Central Asia and the Caucasus under the banner of Islam they put. This caliphate was ruled by the Mongols until 1258. The Caliphate was difficult to govern because it united a vast territory of different ethnic groups through Islam religion by spreading all over the world. Arabic, the language of religion, has become the language of science. Thus, in addition to the Arabs, non-Arab people also played an important role in the formation and development of the culture known throughout the world as Arab culture. Along with Islam, which was introduced by the Arabs, the Arabic script gained popularity, and the role of the Arabic language in schools, madrassas and religious affairs increased.

### II. Statement of Research.

The cultural problems arise for the Arab translator who may find certain phrases in Arabic have

no equivalents in English. For example, the Arabic word Islam simply means “submission”, and derives from a word meaning peace. In a religious context it means complete submission to the will of God. Islam calls for faith in only One God worthy of worship. It also repeatedly instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation. Within a few years, great civilizations and universities were flourishing, according to the Prophet Muhammad, seeking knowledge is an obligation of every Muslim. The synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas and of new thought with old, brought about great advances in medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography, architecture, art, literature, and history. Many crucial systems such as algebra, the Arabic numerals, and also the concept of the zero (vital to the advancement of mathematics), were transmitted to medieval Europe from Islam.

In addition, the sophisticated instruments which made it possible for the European voyages of discovery were developed, including the astrolabe, the quadrant and good navigational maps. There were many words originating from the Arabic language widely used in Uzbek language preserving its meaning with articulation differences that is as the result of assimilation process. Such words mainly seen in religious context. The translation of religious expression is not an easy process. It needs many skills and experiences. This is because when the translator translates any text such as art, management, pedagogical, or political text, he does not care about the mistakes, in other word, this kind of text is not explicit the way religious ones do.

### **III. Research problem**

Translation is taught in Uzbekistan as one of the major of English as a foreign language in most of the academic institutions in Uzbekistan. M.A translation students face difficulty when attempting to translate Islamic expressions from Arabic into English language. They state that it is very difficult to translate Islamic expressions in other cultures or languages, particularly English language. People from Western countries and cultures may not fully understand certain religious terms as one word may convey different meanings.

The religious expressions or texts are so sensitive because of their meaning to holiness. Thus, the translator has to be careful to convey the expression in its full meaning. In other hand, the meaning of the expression must carry out the same goal that it occupies in both the source language and target language. However, it is not an easy process. A translator should be aware of understanding the meaning of the expression in the source language so perfectly in order to keep the sense of expression otherwise he/ she will lose the meaning of the expression. That is, using particular translating strategies may help a translator overcome equivalence problems, culture varieties, languages varieties and many items (Mehawesh & Sadeq, 2014).

The Islamic expressions have a special meaning that differs from any other expression. This is because they evoke the language and the heart together. This really sounds as a big obstacle for a translator to consider the meaning completely and perfectly. In addition, Arabic and English languages are two different cultures where Islamic expressions are connected mainly with Arabic language and culture so the task of the translator is to produce simple and concise translation that is easily understood by non-Arab Muslims. Also, the task of the translator is to produce the translation of Islamic expressions in their cultural entity since they are connected with the culture and non -Arab Muslim may not understand the exact meaning without referring to cultural aspects.

Therefore, this sounds very problematic for translators and makes them produce misunderstanding, confused or wrong meanings in the process of translation (Dweik and Abu Helwah, 2014). The difference between the source language and the target language, as well as variations in their social and religious cultures, makes the process of translating Arabic borrowings from Uzbek to English a huge challenge. Only if the translator has a solid understanding of the culture of the target language, and its specific linguistic rules and differences, can he or she interpret the implied meaning and translate it accurately.

#### **IV. Literature Review**

Since this research deals with translation, the available literature on translation studies in line with the objectives of this research is not that abundant. It compares the contrasting views of translation theories and techniques that are relevant to the topic of the study. This research aims to examine the difficulties and challenges of translating Islamic terms from Arabic into English. It is mainly concerned with assessing the degree of accuracy and fidelity in conveying the meaning of religious words focusing on five widely used translations from Arabic into English. It also identifies and discusses the translating methods used to transfer the meaning of Islamic religious words such as literal translation or free translation. Translation plays a vital role in the world allowing communication between people with different languages to take place.

Throughout history, speakers of different languages communicated with the help of translators and interpreters. Translation is the oldest profession in the world, or as Valery Larbaud put it - *Le plus vieux métier du monde n'est pas ce qu'on pense, c'est celui de traducteur* (The oldest profession in the world is not the one you think; it is that of the translator). Thus, interpreters and translators make an essential contribution to communication in government, business, human services and international relations.

As a result, translators have always been called upon to break down language barriers and facilitate communication. Without translators, communication between monolinguals and speakers of foreign tongues would become almost 95 impossible. In today's complex world, people depend on translation more than ever due to globalization and high levels of migration and flux of refugees, especially within Europe. Communication among these speakers of different languages is made possible thanks to translation. Hatim and Munday (2004) point out that translation has a huge effect on everyday life that ranges from the translation of a key international treaty to a multilingual poster that welcomes customers to a restaurant.

In addition, the ever-increasing number of organizations entering the international arena and the growing human interaction of different cultural backgrounds through social media has made translation one of the central aspects of globalization (Cronin, 2003).

#### **V. Findings in linguistic difficulties and lexical problems**

Translating the Arabic religious terms from Uzbek into other languages is accompanied by many linguistic problems, as no two languages are identical either in the meaning given to the corresponding symbols or in the ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences. Linguistic problems include lexicon, morphology, syntax, text differences, rhetorical differences, and pragmatic factors. For example,

- Word order in Uzbek is different from English. Predicate is in the end of the sentences;
- The sentence structure is complex;
- An Arabic phrase in Uzbek is syntactically unclear and complex for machine translators, due to grammatical relationships, order of words and content;
- Arabic Islamic terms and words can have multiple meanings;
- The Uzbek alphabet consists of 28 letters, and some of these have no equivalent in English;
- The major problem encountered by the translator is the difficulty in rendering some lexical items. One of lexical problems in translating religious words is the lack of equivalence or the absence of the equivalent of some Islamic terms. These terms have no direct counterpart in English, compelling the translator to convey them in a communicative manner.

Other problems that the translators frequently encounter are the following:

- Unfamiliarity with cultural expressions;
- Failure to achieve the equivalence in the second language;

➤ Ambiguity of some cultural expressions;

Lack of knowledge of translation techniques and translation strategies.

The following are some examples of these Islamic terms.

### Arabic terms which are not lexicalized in English

In this section, a group of Arabic words which are not lexicalized in English are discussed. A list of such terms is given in the following table.

Arabic terms	English equivalent	Commentary
Sadaqah	Charitable money, investment to this world and hereafter	Widely used
Hadith	Collection of Prophet Muhammad's sayings	Used mostly in religious interpretation
Fiqh, fuqaha	Jurisprudence, Legal scholars	Mostly in religious context
Ummah	Islamic nation	
Jahiliya	Period of ignorance	
Tavakkal	Put own trust in God	Widely used
Qismet	Fate, destiny	Widely used

The above words express concepts which are known in English but simply not lexicalized; that is not “allocated” English words to express them. The Arabic word “**sadaqah**” literally means to donate money for the poor and needy people. Sadaqah eases hardships and removes calamities. It expiates sins. This word has a religious overtone which is not captured in one-to-one word equivalent.

**Hadith** is a reliably transmitted report of what the Prophet Muhammad said, did or approved. It is considered as a sacred source known as “sunnah” the practice and example of the Prophet which is the second authority for Muslims. Examples of the Prophet’s sayings:

- 1) *God has no mercy on one who has no mercy for others;*
- 2) *None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.*
- 3) *The powerful individual is not he who, knocks the other down, but he who controls himself in a fit of anger;*
- 4) *The truthful and trusty businessman is associated with the prophet's the saints, and the martyrs;*
- 5) *God does not judge according to your bodies and appearances but he scans your hearts and looks into your deeds.*

As we see in the above-mentioned examples Hadith translation is also a difficult task for many translators and language specialists without knowing culture bound a translator may not translate just by relying on lexical features rhetorical features are also important in translation process.

The word **fiqh** (fuqaha) is also widely used term in Uzbek language with Arabic etymology. Many Islamic scholars use this term in their pre congregational meetings before Friday pray at mosques and other places.

The word **umma** is used in Uzbek languages preserving its Arabic meaning “nation” it refers to the whole Muslim world, or the community of believers. As a theological concept, the ummah is meant to transcend national, racial, and class divisions to unite all Muslims. The word is also used in Quran to refer to a more committed group of people within a larger community. And among the folk of Moses (qawm) there have been (a group of) people (umma) who would guide others in the way of the truth and act justly in its light (7:159).

The word **Jahiliyyah** which means (period of ignorance) that goes back to pre-Islamic period. It is derived from the verbal root jahala” to be ignorant or stupid, to act stupidly. Many Islamic

thinkers have used the term to criticize what they saw as the un-Islamic nature of public and private life in the Muslim world.

### Arabic words that are semantically complex

A sample of Arabic words which are semantically complex are discussed. These words are related to processes, religious concepts and social customs which are important enough in the Arabic culture to lexicalize as single words carrying complex meanings. A list of such terms is given below:

**Fitna** (or **fitnah**, pl. *fitan*; Arabic: فتن, فتنّة, "temptation, trial; sedition, civil strife, conflict" is an Arabic word with extensive connotations of trial, affliction, or distress. Although it is a word with important historical implications, it is also widely used in modern Arabic without the underlying historical connotations.

Aside from its use in the Qur'an, *fitna* is used as term for the four heavy civil wars within the Islamic Caliphate from the 7th to the 9th century AD.

Edward William Lane, in his *Arabic-English Lexicon* compiled from various traditional Arabic lexicographical sources available in Cairo in the mid-19th-century, reported that "to burn" is the "primary signification" of the verb. The verb then came to be applied to the smelting of gold and silver. It was extended to mean causing one to enter into fire and into a state of punishment or affliction. Thus, one says that something caused one to enter *al-fitna*, i.e. trial, affliction, etc., or more generally, an affliction whereby some good or evil quality is put to the test. Lane glosses the noun *fitna* as meaning a trial, a probation, affliction, distress or hardship, and says that "the sum total of its meaning in the language of the Arabs" is an affliction whereby one is tried, proved or tested.

Hence, the definition offered by Lane coincide with the definition given in Uzbek language. The usage of the word in Holly book Quran with the meaning of trial, persecution, temptation, dissension or sedition is common. Apart from this the word is used by Islamic scholars in their regular congregational meetings and talks.

### Mushriqqin or a mushriq(partners in idolatry),

The 'ulama' (Islamic religious leaders)

The word (*wasiya*), from Arabic, *vasiyat* in Uzbek which means last wish have totally the same interpretations in both languages.

The word "istighfar" is derived from Arabic root word which means to cover anything in order to protect it from dust and dirt. Istighfar is considered by saying Astaghfirullah.

The next word is" Zakaah" Zakat in Arabic meaning compulsory charity and the same meaning preserved in Uzbek with a slight difference in pronunciation Zakot . The word is used in wider context. One of the most important principles of Islam is that all thing belongs to God, and that wealth is therefore held by human beings in trust. The Arabic word zakaah means both' purification' and growth. Our possessions are purified by setting aside a portion for those in need, and like the pruning of plants, this cutting back balances and encourages new growth. Each Muslim calculates his or her own zakaah individually. In most cases this involves the payment each year of two and a half percent of one's surplus savings.

The words in this category are difficult to translate because they refer to semantically complex concepts which are not found in English. For example, the word [Zakat] as one of the Five Pillars of Islam, zakat is a religious duty for all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria of wealth to help the needy. It is a charitable contribution, often considered to be a tax. It is considered in Islam as a religious obligation, and by Quranic ranking, is next after prayer (*salat*) in importance. Arabic means many things such as virtue, purity, cleansing, cleanness, cleanliness, chastity, righteousness, virtue, virtuousness, decency, chastity. It is a complex concept which refers to the process of ablution "washing with water before prayers". It also

means cleaning the body and the clothes a person is wearing in addition to cleansing the heart and the soul.

## **VI. Summary**

It has become obvious that translating Islamic religious terms is not an easy task for many translators it requires knowledge, competency and certain skills. As discussed above, this research reveals some challenges which students face while translating Islamic expression in religious occasions. The first is cultural voids between Arabic and English.

This problem which is the most difficult to overcome and solved. The second is the minority of equivalences in the target language for Islamic expression. The third is the varieties between both languages specially in syntax. The study concluded some causes for these problems such as the lack of experience in culture of target language users, the lack of knowledge in both language structures and the lack of specialist references for the items. Some solutions are suggested by the study such as training, design materials specialist in this field of translation, and make correlations between translation students and target language users.

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