

SEMANTIC PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING ISLAMIC DISCOURSE LEXICON FROM UZBEK INTO ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The research is related to semantic problems of translating the terms of Islamic discourse which include sacred texts that are the core of universal culture. One of the most usual and important problems of translating Islamic lexicon is semantic one. The article highlights semantic problems of translating Islamic lexicon and suggests possible solutions for them. The main aim of this article is to study the problems of translating lexicon of Islamic discourse from Uzbek into English as well as to give possible solutions for them.

Keywords: Islamic discourse, translation problems, semantic problems, lacunae, semantic gap, polysemic words, general lexicon, religious lexicon, religious texts.

INTRODUCTION

This investigation is devoted to the investigation of semantic problems of English translations of religious texts. In our independent Uzbekistan, as in all spheres, “the situation with religious freedom has dramatically improved. Further strengthening inter-ethnic harmony and inter-religious tolerance is a constant task for us” (Mirziyoyev, 2020).

The Government lead by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, country stepped over the new level of religious reforms. In particular, Shavkat Mirziyoyev in his speech at the first Summit of Organization of Islamic Cooperation’s on Science and Technology in Kazakhstan on September 10, 2017, spoke about the wide-ranging religious reforms implemented in our country (Mirziyoyev). He noted the ongoing efforts to develop science and technology in the country, adding that today’s Muslim world is lagging behind on this spheres. Researches in the field of linguistics also play an important role in fulfilling these tasks. In our country today, a number of scientific studies are being conducted to study the relationship between linguistics and religion.

The topicality of the research which is determined by the following factors:

1) Religion is the most ancient cultural symbol in human society. The study of processes, changes and developments in this field is very interesting in linguistics, however, it is a topical phenomenon in all periods. The research is related to the problems of translation of religious texts, especially Islamic religious texts which include sacred texts that are the core of universal culture;

2) Insufficient study of this problem in the world linguistics;

3) High demand for the adequate translation of Uzbek religious scholars' valuable works which have great importance in the world of Islam.

4) Islamic religious texts are considered canonical, so even mistranslation of a word can cause a big problem. So defining problems of translating religious texts and giving possible solutions is one of the problematic issues in linguistics. The methodological basis of the work is represented by the existing linguistic knowledge about the translation theory. It is possible to consider followings as fundamental work on this direction: Peter Newmark, "Approaches to translation" (Newmark P. Approaches to translation – London: Prentice Hall, 1988), I.G'afurov, O.Mo'minov, N.Qambarov "Tarjima nazariyasi" (G'afurov I.& Mo'minov O.&Qambarov N., 2012), Peter Newmark "A Textbook of Translation", Zoya Proshina "Theory of translation", Ernst R. Wendland, "Survey of translation studies: From the Perspective of Bible Translation Theory and Practice" (E., 2015).

The first scientific-theoretical ideas on theolinguistics are reflected in the researches of linguists such as D.Crystal, E.Kucharska and A.K.Gadomsky, J.Noppen, W.Samarin, N.Ivoylova and others. Studies in Theolinguistics have mainly been conducted by European and Russian scholars on the basis of the Christian religion and aimed at investigating the peculiarities of the Christian religious language and communication.

M.F.Althuwaini (Althuwaini, 2006), from American University in Sharjah, did his thesis on the subject "Ideology in translating religion relating discourse" in 2006. In this thesis, the importance of equivalence in the translation of religious discourse was discussed and the role of ideology in translation was analyzed. That year A.Chebbo (Ann, 2006), from the same university, did his research which is the subject of work "Arabic to English translation of Islamic religious texts". This thesis investigates discourse strategies adopted in the translation of religious texts from Arabic into English. Another research that is related to translation problems of religious texts was done in Sabha University by A. Mohammed and H.Ibrahim (H., 2019) in 2019. The subject of the work is "Exploring some problems in translating some religious expressions from Arabic to

English encountered by 7th semester students of English department in Sebha University”.

In 1997 professor N.M.Ulukov did his PhD dissertation work on the analysis of exotic vocabulary in religious texts. N.M.Ulukov’s work on the subject “Exotic lexicon of Uzbek religious texts” was the first serious work on the subject in Uzbekistan. Sh.M.Sultonova showed the basics of linguocultural analysis of the category of time in sacred texts in her work on “Linguocultural features of the category of time in sacred texts”. M.R.Galieva (Galieva, 2019) did her scientific research on the subject “The reflection of mythological-religious consciousness in the linguistic world picture” in 2019. Sh.A.Yodgorov did the dissertation work on the subject “Research on lexico-semantic issues of the word equivalency in the English translations of the religious texts” in order to get Master’s degree in 2020. Sh.T.Yusupova kizi studied the linguopragmatic features of religious texts and described religious texts in linguistic point of view in her work “Linguopragmatic investigation of religious texts” in 2021. Her PhD research is devoted to the study of formation and development of theolinguistics as a new direction, the issues of textlinguistics and religious texts and religious functional style.

There are enough works done on the problems of translating religious texts in linguistics. They are of great importance that they help to solve some encountered problems while translating religious texts. Nearly all of them focus on studying translation problems of religious texts from Arabic into English. But there is not the same work aimed to give possible suggestions for translating lexical and semantic problems of religious texts from Uzbek to English.

Polysemy refers to “a lexical item which has a range of different meanings” (D., Oxford). For instance, *plain* means *level*, *undecorated*, *pure*, *unobstructed*, *obvious*, *clear*, *common* and *ordinary*. The numerous meanings a word acquires may be a result of the metaphoric or abstract context in which it is used, thus giving it a metaphoric or abstract sense in addition to its original (literal) meaning. Moreover, the different meanings contained in polysemic words have the same etymological origins and are related to one another. While translating religious texts polysemic words may also cause translation problems. There are such words that meaning differs in general lexicon from religious one. For example, there is such definition of the word *faqir* in Uzbek definition dictionary:

1. Moddiy jihatdan nochor, kambagʻal, qashshoq; muhtoj.
2. esk. Birinchi shaxs oʻrnida yoki “men”, biz olmoshlari bilan birlikda ishlatilib, soʻzlovchining kamtarlik qilayotganini ifodalaydi.



3. ko‘chma Nochor, bechora, chorasiz.

There is such definition in the Encyclopaedia of Islam of the word *faqir*:

Faqir-kambag'al, moddiy va ma'naviy jihatdan muhtoj odam. Faqir deyilganda darvish va sufiylar tushuniladi. Zohidlik va sufiylik kambag'allik – "faqr" va "fuqr" ni keng targ'ib qilan. Shoirlar, mualliflar va hattotlar o'zlarini kamtarlik bilan faqir deb atashgan (Z., 2004).

According to Macmillan English dictionary *Fakir* means *a Hindu or Muslim holy man who lives by begging (=asking people for money and food).*

The fakir, or faqir, derived from faqr, is a Muslim Sufi ascetic in the Middle East and South Asia. The Faqirs were wandering Dervishes teaching Islam and living on alms. The term has become a common Urdu, Bengali, and Hindi byword for "beggar". The term has also been used to refer to Hindu and Buddhist ascetics. These broader idiomatic usages developed primarily in the Mughal era in India. Calanus, a Hindu Naga sadhu of the 4th Century B.C., is often called a fakir by historians. There is also a distinct caste of fakirs found in North India, descended from communities of fakirs who took up residence at Sufi shrines.

It is obvious from the example meanings of dictionaries that they differ from each-other. So translator should be careful while translating as he or she shouldn't choose the meanings of the word from general lexicon.

Moreover, translator should be careful to choose the word, he/she can't choose any synonyms from synonymic line. For instance, *faqir, kambag'al, miskin, bechora* and *muhtoj* are synonyms in general lexicon. They may be used instead of another in non-specialized texts, it doesn't cause problem. But from the religious point of view they differ from each-others, each of them has category of being poor, so translator can't use one instead of another. If translator do so, that mistranslation may cause a big problem, as Islamic religious texts are usually scientific and has a function of law of sharia'h for muslims.

It is not linguists task to differentiate these words from religious point of view, as we cannot do so. This is the task of Islamic scholars, the piece from the article that study the difference between *fakir* and *miskeen* is cited in this work, so as to prove that how important choosing the right word while translating religious texts, as they cannot be used instead of each other as synonyms in religious texts.

The UN Refugee Agency has published online article on the theme "Al Fuqara and Al Masakeen". According to the article the majority of Muslim scholars consider that the two terms "fakir" (singular form of "fuqara") and "miskeen" (singular form of "masakeen") have different meanings. They rely on the verse to say that, if there was no

difference between the two, then why would they be both mentioned in the verse? It would not make sense to say that Zakat has to go to the fakir and the miskeen if the terms meant the same thing.

1) *The fakir is more in need than the miskeen. This is the opinion of the Shafi'i and Hanbali schools. One of their arguments is the order between the two in the verse.*

2) *The miskeen is more in need of the fakir. This is the official opinion of the Maliki and Hanafi schools.*

So, translator should be very careful to choose the right word, as he cannot choose any synonym from the synonymic line while translating religious texts.

Determination is the transition of terms into the general lexicon according to various semantic changes due to various factors. This also can cause semantic problem of translating religious texts. Here the example of terms such as *munofiq, umra, mo'jiza, karomat* that determined to general lexicon. *Fakir* also can be the example of determination. Translator should be careful working with also such kind of words. Translator should choose the meaning of these kind of words from the religious dictionaries, not from the general definition dictionaries.

Another serious translation problem from Uzbek into English is met while translating translated words from Arabic into Uzbek which are considered cultural gaps or culture-bound items as “*namoz*”, “*tahorat*” and “*ro'za*”. It is recommended to translate such words as transliteration or transcription. But translator can't transliterate or transcript these words from Uzbek translated variant. If translator did so, reader in English would feel difficulty to find original word in Arabic. So, translator should find these kind of words from Arabic and transliterate, transfer or transcript from original Arabic word. In order to do this translator can read Arabic at least and he/she can work with Arabic-Uzbek and Uzbek-Arabic dictionaries. We made a list of cultural-bound words that translated from Arabic and their Arabic and English variants with the help of Uzbek-Arabic dictionary (Jo'rayev, 2020):

Uzbek	Arabic	English
Namoz	الصلاة	Salat
Tahorat	الوضوء.	Wuzuu
Ro'za	الصوم.	Sovm

Misvok	السواك.	Suvak
Betahoratlik	الحدث.	Hadas
Joynamoz	السجادة	Sajjada
Saharlik	السحور.	Suhaar

There aren't many translated cultural-bound words in Uzbek, because more of them have been translated in transcription or transliteration methods. So translator of Islamic religious texts should remember the translation of such words.

There is a list of words which may cause translation problems while translating and the way of translation by the author in the book "Open letter":

The words in Uzbek	Translation variant in English	The way of translation
Mazammat	Blameworthy	Literal equivalent
Bayyina	Clear proof	Literal translation of meaning
Nasihah	Nasiha	Transference
Istita'a	Istita'a	Transference
Ijmo'	Ijma'	Transference
Taqvo	Piety (taqwa)	Religious equivalent with transcription
Ixtilof	Difference of opinion	Literal translation of meaning
Takfir	Declaring people disbelievers (takfir)	Definition with transcription
Alayhissalom	Alayhissalam	Transference
Munofiq	Munafiq (hypocrite)	Transcription with paraphrasing
Tahorat	Ablution	Literal equivalent
Allah	Allah	Loan word
Jin	Jinn	Loan word
Islam	Islam	Loan word
Nabiy	Prophet	Literal translation
Rasulalloh	Messenger	Literal translation
Zakot	Zakaat	Transliteration

Oxirat kuni	Last day	Literal translation
Ramazon	Ramadan	Loan word
Jihod	Jihad	Transliteration

Translator uses different ways of translation while translating, many of them successful and easy to understand for the reader. But choosing the analogue substitution translation for the word “tahorat” as “ablution” doesn’t make sense. Because “ablution” can’t be equivalent for the word “tahorat” and it is culture-bound term which may called semantic void. It is better to translate it in transcription with the definition, like “wuduu” (washing some part of a body in a special sequence as ordered), transcription with partial equivalent, like wuddu (ablution) or transcription with footnote, like wuduu and footnote like this

Wuduu is the ritual washing performed by Muslims before praying that have special sequence. Washing hands up to the wrists thoroughly three times, rinsing mouth three times, washing face three times, from the hairline to the chin and from ear to ear, making sure the whole face, eyebrows, under the nose and lips are washed. A man should wash the hair of his beard, washing arms and hands from your fingertips up to elbows three times, wiping head starting with hands at the front of head, bringing them to the back of your head and then back to the front again. Wiping ears by putting your index fingers in your ears and wiping the back with your thumbs. Its preferable to use fresh water for this. Washing feet three times up to the ankles, making sure to wipe in between your toes with your little finger.

Islamic expressions have a special meaning that differs from any other expressions. This is because they evoke the language and the heart together. This really sounds as a big obstacle for translator to consider the meaning completely and perfectly. As Uzbek Islamic religious texts are rooted from Arabic and describe Arabic culture in itself, so Arabic and English languages are two different cultures where Islamic expressions are connected mainly with Arabic language and nations’ culture so the task of the translator is to produce simple and concise translation that is easily understood by non-Arab Muslims.

CONCLUSION

Religious texts are the type of texts connected to religious traditions and reflect central notions and concepts of any religion as well as collect all religious tasks. Religious texts can reflect scientific and publicistic features at the same time.

Translation problems of religious texts are one of the topical issues in linguistics. There is high demand for the adequate translation of Uzbek religious scholars' valuable work which have great importance in the world of Islam. In order to translate in a good way translator should study translation problems and possible solutions for them. In this work semantic problems of translating Islamic religious texts and possible solutions have been analyzed.

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