

Challenges in Translating Islamic Economy Expressions from Arabic into English

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Abstract

This paper attempts to identify the problems that a translator may face when translating Islamic economics items from Arabic into English. It is well known among Islamic economics translators that such items pose serious challenges because their meanings may not be available in the target language.

The study is descriptive, comparative and evaluative and focuses on how to translate some models of Islamic economic items derived from the standards of the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions from Arabic to English.

This study begins by giving a general and precise definition of Islamic economics items and how the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions played a crucial role in issuing and developing accounting and auditing standards and contributed positively to transferring the principles of Islamic economics to other cultures.

Key Words: Islamic Economy Items; Translation Challenges; AAOIFI.

Introduction

Today, Islam has become the fastest growing religion in the world, with Muslims now accounting for nearly 30% of the world's population.

Wherever they live, whether in Islamic countries, secular Islamic countries or non-Islamic countries, these people want to protect their identity, obey the rules of their religion, and try to escape the cultural influences and domination imposed by other nations.

Their concerns are undoubtedly reflected in their economic lives. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, Islamic finance has seen a massive growth worldwide due to the desire to establish social, political and economic systems based on Islamic principles and a stronger Islamic identity. We believe that the growing demand for Islamic financial institutions and instruments is a result of this process.

Statement of Problem

The necessity of translating the principles of Islamic economics from Arabic into English has become both a necessity and a challenge for translators from Muslim scholars in general and Arab Muslim translators in particular, given the interest of a large number of people and economic institutions of different nationalities, languages and ethnicities in Islamic economics in recent times.

The main question of the current study is: **To What extent did the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions AAOIFI succeed in giving the correct meaning to the Islamic economics items when translated it from the Arabic language(the original language) into English?**

Research Objectives

This study intends to achieve the following goals :

- 1) Identify the problems facing translation in translating the principles of Islamic economics.
- 2) To highlight the role of the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions AAOIFI in translation Islamic economy items.
- 3) To clarify so the impact of translating Islamic economy items in practice of these principals in the islamic institution

Research methodology

To achieve this study aims which are stated above, researcher follows the descriptive and analysis method.

1. Brief introduction to the islamic economy

An Islamic financial system can play a significant role in the economic development of both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. However, the realization of this process may take some time given the opportunities and challenges provided by the global economy.

The term "economic principle" is generally used to refer to the fundamental law of economics. But in Islam, the ultimate source of this knowledge is the Holy Quran.

2. The translation and the religious translation

Translation is defined as "A written or spoken rendering of the meaning of a word or text in another language."¹

In another definition translation is "the general term referring to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language (source) to another (target), whether the languages are in written or oral form; whether the languages have established orthographies or do not have such standardization or whether one or both languages is based on signs, as with sign languages of the deaf."²

From these definitions we can conclude that the translation is:

- a) The transfer of the meaning from one language (source) in another language (target).
- b) This meaning can be a thoughts or an ideas in written or oral form.
- c) A good translation requires that ³:
- d) It must make sense
- e) It must convey the spirit and manner of the original
- f) It must have a natural and easy form of expression
- g) It must produce a similar response.

¹ Concise Oxford English Dictionary

² Brislin, Ricard. W. 1976. Translation: Application and Research. New York: Gardner Press Inc, p: 1.

³ Nida, Eugene A. (1964). Toward a Science of Translating. Leiden: Brill, p:159.

The Islamic religious expression can be defined as “a sort of idiomatic expression that is generated by Muslim culture and Islam religion norms”⁴

The Religious translation is one of the most difficult types of translation for the reason of dealing with sacred texts that have a specific character and very sensitive, when become as them into a Target Language (TL).⁵

The Islamic economic is a group of rules, values and standards that organize financial transactions and in an Islamic society. These rules and standards are obtained from the holy quoran and Sunna also from jurisprudence according to the changing of life of Muslims all over the world.

3. Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI)

Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) is an independent industry body dedicated to the development of international standards applicable for Islamic financial institutions. The Bahrain-based organisation started producing standards as early as 1993.⁶

AAOIFI standards have been developed in consultation with leading Sharia scholars, with several countries adopting them. Although AAOIFI standards are not binding on members, over the last few years the organisation has made significant progress in encouraging the widespread adoption of the standards.⁷

The AAOIFI has issued 117 standards that address 59 Shariah, 33 accounting, eight auditing, 14 governance standards, and three codes of ethics⁸

The examples are discussed separately according to the following:

a) **بيع التولية** **translation «Tawliyyah»:** which means to sell as per the purchasing price without making profit.

We notice in this case that the translator did not translate this sale with a single English word, but rather chose to translate it with the meaning. ” because this term does not have an equivalent word in the TL.

⁴ Khammyseh, Daoud. The Problems in Translating Islamic Expressions in Religious Occasions , Journal of Education and Practice ;p103.

⁵ Al-Harashseh, A. (2013). Translation of Islamic Texts and Ideology. AWEJ Special Issue on Translation, 2, 107-117.

⁶ <https://aaoifi.com/?lang=en>

⁷ <https://islamicmarkets.com/education/aaoifi-standards>

⁸ <https://aaoifi.com/announcement/aaoifi-makes-all-its-standards-accessible-on-its-website-on-a-complimentary-basis/?lang=en>

b) **هامش الجدية translation «Hamish Jiddiyyah»:** it is a form of guarantee for any financial damage that may occur.

We note that the translation of this term was in the meaning, with reason this term does not have a similar word in the TL.

c) **بيع الكالى بالكالى translation «Bay' al-Kali` Bil-Kali`»:** selling a debt for another debt.

The sale (ba'i) of a debt (dain/ dayn) for a debt. Broadly speaking, it involves the exchange of two objects, both delayed, or the exchange of a countervalue for another delayed countervalue. This term is used to describe several different ways of debt-for-debt exchanges. The most well known of these exchanges is the one in which a lender extends his debtor's repayment period in return for an extra amount (riba or interest) over the principal⁹.

The term kali has been translated as a debt in the target language, but kali in Arabic may have many forms, while in the target language it only means loan debt.

d) **المساومة «Musawamah» (Bargaining)**

Musawamah is a type of transaction in which the buyer can negotiate the selling prices with the seller¹⁰.

The translator choose the word bargaining in the target language, which is very similar to the original Arabic word. This is due to the existence of this transaction in the target language community.

e) **المرابحة translation «Murabahah» (Mark-up Sale)**

Murabaha literally means an increase in capital or profit. Technically, it's a particular kind of sale where the seller discloses the acquisition cost of commodity and markup or profit¹¹.

The translator choose the word Mark-up Sale in the target language, to indicate the main characteristic of this transaction which is the existence of the margin of profit or Mark-up in Murabaha.

f) **عقود التبرعات translation ('Uqud al-Tabarru'at):** donation contracts/ non-commutative contracts.

⁹ <https://fincyclopedia.net/islamic-finance/b/bai-al-kali-bil-kali>

¹⁰ <https://academy.musaffa.com/musawamah-a-bargain-sale-in-islamic-finance/>

¹¹ <https://www.blossomfinance.com/posts/introduction-to-murabaha>

A non-compensatory contract (in Arabic, aqd tabarru) in which a property is donated by one party to another against no consideration (iwadh/ ajr, etc.) as in a unilateral transfer of wealth or resources. The donor transfers ownership of the property to the donee free of charge and free of any commitment or obligation.¹²

Donation contracts are among the so-called contracts shared between Arabic and English cultures, and for this reason the translator did not find any difficulty in translating them into the target language because these contracts have the same laws in both cultures.

Conclusion

The translation of Islamic economic terms from Arabic to English plays an important role in spreading its principles in other societies despite the many challenges.

Through the efforts made by the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) in this translation, the translator must be competent in the details of Islamic financial transactions and in the principles of Islamic economics when translating, especially in cases where there is no equivalent in the culture of the target language.

¹² [https://fincyclopedia.net/islamic-finance/n/noncommutative-contract#:~:text=A%20non%2Dcompensatory%20contract%20\(in,of%20any%20commitment%20or%20obligation.](https://fincyclopedia.net/islamic-finance/n/noncommutative-contract#:~:text=A%20non%2Dcompensatory%20contract%20(in,of%20any%20commitment%20or%20obligation.)

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