



Review of Some Orientalists' Approaches used in the Translation of the Holy Quran

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Abstract: Islam and Muslims were and still are subject to systematic attacks on their physical beings and on their religious belief. These attacks are from individual persons, and from organized institutions as well; who are fiercely attacking the Islamic Religion, to disgrace the Islamic Values and distort the image of the Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him. This paper is an attempt to shoulder the reasonability to speak to these people in their own languages to correct some wrong images; they had about Islamic Faith. On the other hand we want to defend Muslim entities and individuals as well. The paper discusses some questionable approaches used by the Orientalists in translating the Holy Quran. It will shed light on mistakes made in these translations. The findings proved that there was great harm-intentionally or unintentionally-made to Islam and Muslims due to these mistranslation practices of the Quran, the Holy Book of Muslims and the ultimate authentic reference to all Islamic laws and Islamic Teachings.

Keywords: Religious Differences, Film Title Translation, Functional Equivalence Theory

1. BACKGROUND

There were great efforts from Islamic scholars who wrote to defend Islam and Muslims, especially in the area of the Translation of the Holy Quran. Some articles were so good and powerful in criticizing – those intentional or unintentional practices of wrong translations of the Quran, by some of the Orientalists. But these great efforts were written by these Muslims Scholars and Fuqha (فقهاء) in Arabic or other local languages, a thing that made the messages limited to specific readers and consequently did not reach the target audiences- the Orientalists themselves - in their *own languages*. So this article is an attempt and may be followed by others to reflect the viewpoints of these Islamic scholars in *English* to correct some wrong stereotype images about Islam and Muslims that were made and are still made by Orientalists.

1.1. The Quran and the Arabic Language

Islam is a universal religion and the Quran is the WORD of ALLAH Almighty to his messenger Mohammed—peace be upon him. It was revealed during 23 years to reach the four corners of the earth. The Quran was revealed in Arabic to challenge the Arabs in their own trade; and to give evidence for its Divine origin as not a man-made book. The Arabs were challenged to make ten Suras similar to it. Then they were challenged again to make *only* one sura, but they could not make it in both situations.

According to (Siddiek: 2012) the moment that (Gabriel)-peace be on him) was sent by Allah Almighty to Earth to speak to Mohammed (peace be upon him), in Makkah- in his own Arabic language; that moment—was the greatest in the history of the Arabic language. (Siddiek) believes that the Arabic Language had reached its maturity as a full grown linguistic system, to be selected as a perfect medium of communication at that *time and during all times*.

The Quranic language is not too complicated with obsolete language structures, as it was the case in the Jahalia era, nor too lower as it is spoken today, with different variations in the Arab world. So that moment was historical in the development of the Arabic Language. The Arabic language – comparatively – then was at its best and mature enough to carry the word of Allah Almighty, in the most elegant style of art, grammar, lexicology, phonology and stylistics and in all other linguistic aspects. So the Arabic language had reached the peak of perfectness, when Gabriel (peace be upon him) came down to Makkah to teach the prophet- peace be upon him – the first revelations of the Holy Quran.

Because the Quran is a divine word, Allah Almighty made selection to Arabic language as the best linguistic container that could carry HIS WORD, with great precision to his worshippers in Arabia, and then to all humans on earth. So the message of Allah Almighty was clearly carried to reach the target population in Arabia in their own tongue. And with the help of the Suna—the teachings and the sayings of the prophet—peace be upon all Islamic instructions and values were effectively taught and clearly explained to the believers.

Islam and Arabic are twins, so whenever the word Islam is mentioned, then Arabic will automatically be entwined with it. This connection between Islam and Arabic should not make them appear as two garments especially tailored for the Arabs in Arabia to wear. In fact Islam is a universal message for the Arabs and Non-Arabs as well. But Arabic was just a means to carry the message to the believers all over earth. But some scholars tended to intentionally misuse the terms Islam to look as only tailored for the Arabs, so they sometimes speak about the Islam of the Arabs or even Mohammed the prophet of the Arabs. But the three mentioned *values* were not and will not be branded as *only* Arabic. Islam is a religion that targeted all human beings and Jinn as well. The Quran was revealed to Mohammed—peace be upon him—and he was authorized to access the Da'awa to all human beings.

So Mohammed—peace be upon him—did not invent or write the Quran as some western scholars claimed, because that was beyond human capacity to create such a beautiful composition. The Quran was revealed in Arabic, so the Arabs should not misunderstand its precise teachings; and it was a great luck for the Arab and the Arabic language as well to be bestowed with such honour. But the Ejam (Non-Arab), on the other side of the world were also meant to know Islam and adopt it. So the Quran reached them through a second source, through the translations of its meanings and the translation of the Suna of Mohammed—peace be upon him—into their languages.

Then the Arabs were to shoulder the burden of carrying the message of Islam to other people. They exerted great efforts to help understand the message of Allah Almighty and committed to the fact that Islam was and still for all people to join; and Allah Almighty had pledged to keep HIS message perfect and unchanged.

Islam and the Quran were not tailored for the Arab use, but it was a divine message to all human beings on earth as well as to the Jinn. Non-Arabic speakers—did not get the message of the Quran directly because of the linguistic barriers, so some translations were made to make the message reach them. Therefore, translation was the media through which Quran was and still expected to reach Non-Arabic speakers. Some of those translations were made for different purposes. Some were not good enough as they were meant to serve special agendas of specific group or ideology. And some were not accurate because of lack of mastering the Arabic language by those translators who did the job. Arabic is a rich language and has its own secrets. The Quran used all linguistic techniques to dispatch a powerful and effective message to the Arabs, who were so brilliant and eloquent in their language.

Many translations were made, either intentionally or unintentionally to distort the beauty of the Quranic discourse or meant to disgrace Islam. But the purpose of distorting Islam seemed to be the ultimate goal for some scholars who created those translations. This paper aims to investigate some of these controversial approaches of these translators, in order to reflect a perfect image of Islam and repair the great damage made by some of these scholars to serve their hidden agendas or intentions; by misinterpreting or mistranslating the Quranic text.

2. INTRODUCTION

From the very beginning, Islam had faced several challenges from its opponents in Makkah and Maddinah. And during their long history, Muslims were subject to military and intellectual invasion as well. The Intellectual invasion intensified and continued at various forms up to this day; and hatched many conspiracies against Islam, and still does. But Allah Almighty has promised and sponsored to save this religion and His Book, as He clearly stated in the Quran.

(إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ) - (الحجر الآية 9)

(Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian)-(Al-Higr:9)

The intellectual invasion began in the eighteenth century. Orientalism was the most effective weapon, chosen by those intellectual invaders from the western part of the globe. Some of those intellectuals had gone many roads and routes to portray Islam and show it in a distorted picture. They raised

questions and made false claims to highlight what they believed as deficiencies and weaknesses with the Quran and the Hadith. They worked hard, investigated and trod almost all Islamic areas, and published huge numbers of books disgracing the principles and the teachings of Islam and the Hadith of the Prophet - peace be upon him. The Orientalists showed great interest in the Quran as the major source of the Islamic Teachings and the Islamic laws. So they questioned this source in term of its reliability from linguistic, literary and legislative perspectives.

Here in this paper I will focus efforts on some areas of studies of the Quran made by these Orientalists. Such areas we will cover will include their opinion in denying the Quran as a divine revelation from Allah Almighty and as the primary source of all Islamic teachings and values. I will focus on some of their approaches on the translations of the Holy Quran, as the translating of the Quranic text was the most *effective* tool through which they were able to study the Holy Book; and it was as well - the same tool that they implemented to distort the image of Islam and Muslims at the same time.

Some Orientalists did really make great harm by mistranslating the Quranic text. Thus they had *unfortunately* deprived their own native people from the pleasure of studying and understanding the marvelous Quranic discourse in their own language. Some of them were behind some bad translations which we are going to trace.

2.1. Who are Orientalists?

Now we need to define the term 'Orientalists' then investigate some approaches in their translations of the Holy Quran, to see the objectives behind those translations and the degree of harm they did to the Islamic Faith in general, and the Quranic text in particular.

Muslim and Arab researchers hold different opinions in defining the term Orientalism. They have different definitions to this term, based on the Orientalists' views or activities. So the term can be defined according to the goals those Orientalists were planning to attain. These orientalists can also be categorized according to place of residency or religious beliefs. So it is difficult to mention all aspects or concepts of the term, but we can here reflect some views of some of Islamic scholars in their understanding of the term *Orientalists*.

- According to Malik bin Nabi, Orientalists are the western scholars who wrote about Islamic thought and civilization. (Bin Nabbi:1977).
- Mohammed Kurd Ali sees Orientalists as the scholars who want to search in the languages and the sciences of the Orient.(Ali:1998)
- Ziadi sees that the orientalist is the one who studies the civilization of the Arabs and Islam. (Al-Ziadi:1983).
- Dr. Edward Said (1979) says "...by Orientalism I mean several things, all of them, in my opinion, interdependent. The most readily accepted designation of Orientalism is an academic one, and indeed, the label still serves in a number of academic institutions." Said adds that the Orientalists is "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism". The term was also used by Said (1978) to elucidate his own challenge to the validity of such methods.

2.2. About Translation

We see translation as divided into two types: literary and explanatory translation that is: verbal and conceptual translation. **Literary translation:** deals with the transfer of speech from one language to another with compatibility of the systems and the meanings of the original source. It is like finding synonym in the target language, (Al-Zahabi:1961). **But the Explanatory Translation:** is the explanation of speech and meaning in another language without giving importance to the arrangement of the original source, but keeping all the desired meanings from the source language. (Musa:1992).

2.3. Requirements of Translation

According to Al-Zahabi (1999), researchers interested in translation must provide four conditions to achieve correct translations.

- Understanding both languages: the translator must be familiar with the systems of the source language and the target language as well.
- Realizing the characteristics of both languages and their grammatical structures.
- Understanding the meanings and purposes of the source language on acceptable bases.
- The translation into the target language should be independent from the original source.
- And as a translator I can add that the translator or the interpreter must be familiar with the social and cultural context of the text that s/he is about to translate.
- A good translator should also be equipped with high and sensitive intuition to enable him/her to guess the meaning beyond the physical text.

2.4. Translation of the Quran

Is it the translation of the Quran or the translation of the *meaning* of the Quran?

Islamic scholars and researchers disagreed in the past in the possibility of translating the Quran text. They were two teams. Their disputes have ranged between acceptance and refusal. Each team provided evidence to defend his opinions. Al-Fageer (2016) believes that, this dispute is in fact at theoretical verbal level, because translation as we have already mentioned is divided into two categories: literary translation and explanatory translation. So the Translation of the Quran is a literary translation when translated into another language system. In literary translation as usual, the vocabulary of the target language will be used to replace the vocabulary and style of the source language. In this way the style of the translation should bear the restricted original meanings, as they appear in the rhetorical systems of the source language. But Al-Zahabi (1999) sees that is not possible with the Quran- the Book of Allah Almighty; because the Quran is miraculous and challenging in its system, in its meaning, in its rules and in its legislation. So there isn't any language that can emulate to give similar production of its meanings. This view is almost held by the majority of Islamic scholars.

So the first group of the Islamic scholars who believes in prohibiting the translation of the Quran adopted the concept of literary translation. The explanatory translation of the Quran means interpretation of the meaning of the Quranic Text in another language. This will help to attain the purpose, which the Quranic teachings drive at. In this case, as Musa et al.(1992) believe the simulation of the translation is not required, as in the case of literary translation. So there is little point of difference among the Islamic scholars in such kind of translation. Thus, we can say that the translation of the Quran according to the second view is permissible. It is in fact a religious duty and responsibility of all Muslims to report the Daawa (CALL), the Teachings, the Islamic Principles and all Islamic Values, to those who do not understand or speak the Arabic Language. Our Prophet – peace be upon him-said: (بلغوا عني ولو آية) - as narrated by (Al-Bukhari), and by this the prophet wanted to say that we have to dispatch the message of Islam to reach all human on earth. The Prophet was sent by Allah to report HIS message to all human beings. So the message reached the Arabs through their Arabic tongue; the Arabs then were deputized by Mohammed–peace be upon him-to communicate the message and report Islam to all (Non-Arabic) speakers. Of course this would not be, but through their own (foreign) languages.

Musa (1992) reports that investigators and modern scholars use the term "translation of the meaning of the Holy Quran" and not the translation of the Quran in order to avoid disputes and doubts. Musa says that, in his message to the Prime Minister of Egypt, the Imam Mustafa Maraghi-then the Sheikh of Al-Azhar Mosque-explained the importance of the *translation* of the Holy Quran. In this message we found the Imam used the term *translation* of the Holy Quran. As he put it, people worked in the past and they are working now in *translating* the Holy Quran to different languages. But the term *translation of the meanings of the Holy Quran* as Musa (ibid) asserts had appeared for the first time in the final statement issued by the International Symposium of the Translations of the Meanings of the Quran, held during (21-22) March in 1986 in Istanbul, Turkey. So, this terminology was – afterwards – used in all the translations of the Quran issued by the Islamic Society in Tripoli, as well as by King Fahd Complex for Publishing the Holy Quran in Saudi Arabia, in addition to the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Egypt, and some other Islamic countries and organizations.

3. THE ARABIC LANGUAGE AS A MIRACULOUS LANGUAGE

According to Al-Qossi (2016), the miraculous features of the Arabic language is reflected in the difficulty of interpreting many of its wordings, especially that came in the Quranic Text. Some expressions in the Quran could not and cannot be interpreted in any other language. Such as:

(الذَّيْنِ، أُمَّة، الساعة، الولاء، آية، الإحسان، التقوى، إمام، أوَّاب، عاكفين، سنستدرجهم، عَرَضَ هذا الأَدْنَى، قَدَّمَ صِدْق، وأُملي لهم، أنزل سكينته، إلا أن تقطع قلوبهم، التي جعل الله لكم قياماً، قولاً معروفاً الخ...)

Al-Qossi believes that these words incapacitated the Arabs themselves to come with similar meaning using their *own* language, but they could not, so if it was the case with the Arab themselves, then how could it be possible to render the meaning of the Quranic Text in other languages? Al-Qossi, therefore, said that some translators used to resort to use the Arabic word itself (transliteration), or they try to further explaining the meaning of the Arabic word instead of using an equivalent word from the source language.

3.1. The Untranslatability of the Holy Quran

One of the hardest attempts being made in the field of translation from Arabic into other languages is the attempts of translating the Holy Quran. The translation of only one Sura of this miraculous and eloquent text into any other language, would face great difficulties; because of the great loss of the beautiful and wonderful meaning and style of the original text. Also the rhetorical and splendor structure of the Quranic Verses, would lose its accuracy and preciseness, and thus would empty the Quranic word or text from its influential effect and significance. Al-Bandaq (1983) reported that (Salah al-Din Ershaid)-who is a specialist in the translation of the Holy Quran into French, said that he *practically* found great difficulties in translating some of the Quranic terms, such as: nation-الامة, right-الحق, evildoers-الفاسيقون, and many other words with different meanings. Abdul Rahim (1988) says that there are other obstacles to translate the meaning of the Holy Quran, including: the chopped letters-المقطعة الحروف that come at the beginning of some Suras-سور, the synonyms and the names of Allah-اسماء الله الحسنى. Also translators could face difficulties in translating some linguistic elements such as feminization forms-التأنيث of some names and duality or twinning of others-التثنية in the Arabic language. There is also the issue of the subject pronouns-ضمير المتكلم, in addition to the issue of parsed words-الكلمات المعربة as well as the question of similarities. Also the word لفظ الجلالة-الله God is another problem, in addition to many other Quranic words and terms.

3.2. The First Translations of the Quran

The Quran is the immortal book of Islam. This universal message was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (the mercy of Allah)-peace be upon him - for all the worlds. It was revealed in Arabic, and the Prophet – peace be upon him- was incited to report it to the Arabs and None-Arab, simultaneously.

There was no doubt that the news of that new religion and that new Arabic Book had reached many non-Arabs all over the world at that time, from the very beginning. And it was sure that those people must have understood the meanings of the translated Quran into their own languages. So the Quran must have been translated into other languages rather than Arabic, as a necessity and as a practical need to benefit all human beings. The meanings of some of the Quranic Verses had earlier been translated in the era of the Prophet-peace be upon him. The translations-as we can guess, could have taken this track.

- According to Al-Zahabi (1999), the first translation of the Quran—as we can guess-must have been done in the court of Ashama ibn-Abjar the king of Abyssinia after the fifth year of Al-Baath (revelation); when the early Muslims were forced to immigrate to Abyssinia to escape for their religion from the bad dealing with the people of Makkah.
- The King of Abyssinia was said to have asked Ja'afar ibn Abi Talib-a companion of the Prophet-peace be upon him-to offer him a note from the Quran about Jesus-peace be upon him. Then Ja'afar ibn Talib read out (كهيعص) from the Sura of (Marry) سورة مريم. Then the King was said to have wept until his beard was got wet with his tears. We think-with no doubt- that the (Negus) understood the meanings of the Holy Quran when translated to him into the Abyssinian language.
- After the Hudaibiya Truce in the sixth year of the Prophet migration, the Prophet - peace be upon him - decided to call for Islam outside Arabia, in three continents, simultaneously. So he wrote to

Hercules in Byzantium (in Europe) and to Chosroes, King of Persia, (in Asia), and to Cyrus (in Alexandria), as well as to the Negus, the King of Abyssinia (in Africa). It was obvious that all those Monarchs must have official translators, who made clear the translations of the content of the Prophet's messages in their own languages to their Kings. Doubtless-that the messages of the Prophet-peace be upon him-must have included some Quranic verses- آيات.

- Musa (1992) reports that Al-Sarakhsi (died in 483AH/1090) said in his book- المبسوط في الفقه - Al-Mabsoot fi Al-Fiqh الحنفي - in the section of Prayers; that the Persians wrote to Salman Al-Farsi (may Allah be pleased with) him-to write to them surat Al-Fatiha سورة الفاتحة in Farsi so that they could recite it in their prayers. He wrote to them the Sura and they used to read it in their prayers until their tongues were accustomed to fluent reading.
- There were a series of translations of the Qur'an into various languages of the world at that time. According to Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, as Al-Fageer (2016) reports there was a Syriac manuscript in the library of Manchester University, in England, with some excerpts of translations of the Quran, such as Al-Fatiha, and other verses, dating back to the time of Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, in the era of the Umayyad Caliphate Abdul Malik bin Marwan. Humidullah also stated that the Greek philosopher Nqitans, in the 9th century (the third for prophet Migration), had translated the Quran in Greek, and divided the translation into two sections: one for the translation and the other for summaries.
- But the complete translation of the Quran according to Al-Zahabi (1999), was later made in Farsi, Turkish, Indian and other languages. Thus the Holy Quran was translated into more than one hundred and forty languages, and there may be many versions of translations of the Quran in the same language.

3.3. The Role the Orientalists in the Translation of the Holy Quran

Musa (1992) says that the Orientalists started their activities when Islam rang the doors of Europe, with the establishment of the Islamic State in Andalusia, which witnessed a scientific renaissance of fine Islamic civilization that had never existed in Europe before. Then Europeans, who were in deep ignorance and backwardness, began to look for the factors behind the glorious Muslim renaissance in that great age. Then discovering this advancement, Musa (ibid) says that the Europeans hurried to the scientific centers which scattered all over Andalusia, as individual persons or in groups, to tap from the fountains of Muslims and learn various Islamic sciences. They showed great interests and paid attention, particularly to the Quran, as it was the major source of Islam and the source of the Islamic renaissance. Then the Orientalists as Musa (ibid) puts it concentrated their efforts in the study of the Quran in terms of explaining, interpreting and translating its meanings and investigating the linguistic aspects, eloquence, methods, rules and legislations and many other issues concerned with the Holy Book. Then they translated the major Arabic and Islamic references in various Islamic arts and sciences.

According to Fatani (2006), Mark of Toledo, in the early thirteenth century, made literal, translation into Latin, which survived in a number of manuscripts. In the fifteenth century, Juan of Segovia produced another translation in collaboration with the Mudejar, Isa of Segovia, but only the prologue survived. In the sixteenth century, Juan Gabriel Terrolensis aided Cardenal Eguida da Viterbo in another translation into Latin. In the early seventeenth century, another translation was made, attributed to Cyril Lucaris.

3.4. The First Translations of the Quran by the Orientalists

According to Al-Bandaq (1983), the Christian Western World considered Islam as an imminent threat to the Christian religion and they were anxious of the first translations of the Quran. Therefore, no translation of the Holy Quran appeared there until five centuries passed of the advent of Islam. The first translation was completed in Latin inspired by (Pierre Le) of the Abbey of Cluny in southern France in 1143 and made by "Robert de Retina)-an English priest with the aid of a German priest called (Hermann). However, this translation did not come into being because of the fear of the Church of its expected influence on the public Christian opinion, so it appeared after four centuries in 1543. Al-Bandaq (1983) says that the version of the Abbey of Cluny was translated into Italian, German, Dutch, French, English and Russian languages. Thus the Holy Quran was translated into the languages of Europe and into most of the world's languages, but all those translations had not been taken *directly* from the original Arabic text.

3.5. The Important Orientalist Schools in the Field of the Translation of the Holy Quran

The Orientalists translated the Holy Quran in many languages and across many countries. The number of translations was increasing in different languages. Some of those translations-despite some deficiencies - had served Islam in one way or another, but most the translations were intended to serve other purposes-the translators own agendas. We can mention some of these translations here by classifying them into categories according to their schools of thought. We will go through the most active schools that took great interests in the translation of the Holy Quran.

a) *The Spanish Orientalist School*

According to Fatani (2006), the Spanish Orientalist school of thought did not receive sufficient investigations by researchers, although it was considered the origin of all other European Orientalist Schools. Many European Orientalists traveled to Andalusia to study the Islamic civilization. The various Islamic sciences and the translation of Islamic references, including the Quran had started from Toledo in Spain. Among the most famous and the oldest translations made by this school were:

- The earliest known translation of the Quran in any European language was the Latin work done in 1143; by Robert of Ketton, who was the head of the powerful monastery of the Abbey of Cluny in medieval France.
- In the early thirteenth century, Mark of Toledo made another, more literal, translation into Latin, which survived in a number of manuscripts.
- In the fifteenth century, Juan of Segovia produced another translation in collaboration with the Mudejar, Isa of Segovia but only the prologue survived.
- In the sixteenth century, Juan Gabriel Terrolensis aided Cardenal Eguida da Viterbo in another translation into Latin. In the early seventeenth century, another translation was made, attributed to Cyril Lucaris.
- In the fifteenth century, Juan of Segovia produced another translation. (Fatani:2006)

b) *The German Orientalist School*

As mentioned by (Hassnain:2012), this school was famous for their interest in the translation of the Quran, and the most important translations made by these scholars were:

- The translation of (Sefweigger) of Nuremberg of the Church of Frauen - Solomon. It was the first translation of the Quran in the German language, published under the title of "The Mohammadian Koran" which appeared in three volumes in 1616, but it was not directly translated from the Quran Arabic Text. Friedrich Majrllaan's Translation which was known as "The Turkish Bible" was published in 1770 and it was translated directly from the Arabic text.
- Fiedrich Alberthad Translation was published as "The Koran or Muslim Law" in the same year
- Boysen translation was printed in 1773. (Al-Fageer:2016)
- L.Ullmann in 1840
- F. Rukert in 1888
- M. Hennigg in 1901. (Hassanain:2012)

c) *The French Orientalists School*

The French Orientalists were also interested in translating the Holy Quran. They took great interest in studying all aspects of the Holy Book. Among the best known translations according to (Hassanain:2012) were:

- André du Ryer's translation that appeared in Paris in 1647. Du Ryer was the consul of France in Egypt. He was a man of letters who excelled in both Arabic and Turkish languages.
- E. Savary's translations printed in Paris in 1783. He long lived in Egypt and mastered the Arabic language.
- Kazimirski's translation was published in Paris in 1832. He was the translator of the Consul of France to Iran.
- E. Montet's translation: it was printed in Paris in 1929. He was a professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Geneva.

- R. Blachere's translations appeared in Paris in 1947. He was a prominent Orientalist, and a professor of Arabic philosophy at Sorbonne University.
- D. Masson's translation was published in Beirut in 1975. She was an eminent orientalist.

d) The English Orientalist School

The British Orientalists also showed great interest in the translation of the Holy Quran. The first translation of the Holy Quran in English appeared in the late seventeenth century. According to (Hassanain:2012), the most famous English translations of these translations included:

- A. Ross translation which was published in London in 1648. It was translated from the French version of André du Ryer into English and considered the first translation of the Holy Quran in English.
- George Sale's translation was printed in London in 1734. It was translated directly from Arabic. Sale's translation is considered the oldest English translations and the most famous as well.
- M. Rodwell, a priest whose work appeared in London in 1861.
- E. Palmer: His translation was published in 1880 in Oxford.
- R. Bell's translation was published in 1939 in Edinburgh. Bell changed the order of the Suras and developed a new chronology for the Quranic Verses.

e) The Italian Orientalists School

According to Hassanain (2012), the Italians Orientalists contributed effectively in the area of the translation of the Holy Quran, the most famous translations were:

- A. Arrivabene: It appeared in 1547. It was the first translation of the Quran into the Italian language.
- A. Faracassi: This translation was issued in Milan in 1914. Faracassi was a teacher of Arabic in the Royal School of Arts.
- Dr. Luigi Bonelly: His translation was printed in 1929. He specialized in Persian and Turkish languages and was a professor at the University of Naples.
- Martino Moreno: His translation was published in 1967 in Turin. He was a professor of Oriental Studies at the University of Naples
- Father Federico Peirone: This scholar was a professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Universities of Turin and Milan.

3.6. Why did the Orientalists Translate the Quran?

According to Al-Fageer (2016), the Holy Quran was translated by a large number of Orientalists. Some of those translations had definitely helped in the spread of Allah's word to his worshippers. They have served Islam in general and the Quran in particular. But the majority of those translations were not made to provide readers with accurate idea about Islam and Quran. Al-Fageer (2016) says that most of those translations aimed to serve other agendas, to achieve the translator's own goals in questioning Muslims in their religion, and to launch more raids and attacks against Islamic Teachings and Islamic Culture. Those translations also aimed to provide evidences that the Quran was a human-made book, to refute the Islamic principles and values, and denounce the tenets of the culture and civilization of Islam. Most of the Orientalists' objectives, according to Al-Fageer (2016), were to discredit the Quran in various ways, by exploiting scientific disciplines and by claiming scientific objectivity. Ezzat (1991) reports that some of those Orientalists had openly announced their goals, as George W. Seale who said in his introduction to his translation that Muhammad was in fact the author of the Quran and his main inventor, although it was likely that the assistance which he obtained from others in this regard was not an easy one.

3.7. Orientalists Approaches to the Translation of the Holy Quran

The Orientalists, though claimed scientific integrity, they followed twisted ways and walked every tract they could, to serve their goals. Ezzat (1991) made a summary for some violations made by these translators of the Quran as following:

- They subjected texts to their purposes; to serve the idea they wanted to impose.
- They were selective in choosing specific texts.
- They made intentional misrepresentations and distortions of the texts.
- They used to make interpretations of the meanings, when it appeared impossible to distort the text.
- They overlooked what could be good evidence that the Quran is the Word of Allah to his messenger Mohammed (peace be upon him).
- They phished for specific texts to serve their objectives and intentions.
- They confused fixed sources with what was seen as mere fantasies and speculations.
- They used their writing as rocket launchers base for other studies of the Quran mostly contain defamation of Islam and the Prophet, peace be upon him.
- They exerted great effort to prove that Quran was human-made.

3.8. Inaccuracy in Some Approaches in Translating the Holy Quran

Al-Bandaq (1983) says that, the Orientalists made many translation of the Quran, but some of those attempts were inadequate, distorted and flawed because of the impossibility to accommodate translation, due to lack of mastering the techniques of the Arabic language and its secrets. So, they distorted the text significances and fell in grave defects and errors. According to Al-Bandaq (1983) those inadequacies of their approaches can be highlighted in the following points:

- Some of the Orientalists lacked mastery over the secrets of the Arabic language,
- They were ignorant of the use of puns in the Quran
- They did not understand the exact meanings of the text,
- They deviated from the true intention of the text,
- Their understanding was confined to only one side,
- They mixed between different Arabic words,
- They had limited knowledge of Arabic,
- They used to confuse between Arabic, Hebrew and Syriac,
- They have confusion with some Jewish and Christian beliefs

3.9. Some Errors of the Orientalists in the Translation of the Quran

According to Al-Fageer (2016), most Orientalists have fallen into errors in their translation of the Quran. The most important were the semantic and linguistic mistakes; in addition to errors related to the Quranic text orthographic system. Most Orientalists were not fully commanding the Arabic language, so they made semantic and linguistic misinterpretations. They were also not familiar with the Quranic system and its related sciences, the thing that made some of them commit many mistakes of translation and interpretations. Here we can mention some points against these translations

According to Shekhani (2012), there are many points against the translation of some Orientalists which can be summed up in these points that:

- Some of the Orientalists used to make inferences from Islamic principles through misinterpretations of some correct Islamic theories.
- They used to make unbound free translation compatible with their intentions by rendering, delaying, neglecting or modifying the texts.
- They used to hunt abnormal readings of the Holy Verses and to create doubts in the documentation of the Quranic source.
- Some translations were intended to disprove and change the Islamic principles.

- Dissemination of misleading translations involving hatred and bigotry.
- They used extinct words difficult to modern intellectuals to understand.
- Some translators wrote under pseudonyms.
- They tried through their translations - especially the French translations-to stress the idea that the Quran was written by Mohammad and that the book is full with contradictory and not inspired by Allah Almighty.
- Some Orientalists tried to prove that the Prophet- peace be upon him-was briefed by some Jewish writers and took from them.
- Some wrote their introductions before setting their translation including defamation of Islam and the Prophet and Muslims.
- Some tried to re-arrange the Quran in order to create discord and confusion among the educated Muslim youth.
- Some of them made changes in some verses of the Quran by dismissing some verses and put some others in their places.

4. DISCUSSION

If the validity of any findings in any study depends on the objective research methodology, then the accuracy of the approach in translation area should be the criteria to the accuracy of any translation, then consequently the translation can be accepted or rejected. So, the question is: were the Orientalists approaches in the translation of the Quranic Text scientific and valid to come close to the intended meanings in the original text?

4.1. First: The Translation of the Text, not the Meaning

The Orientalists commitment to this approach *of translating the text, not the meaning* is clear from some titles they gave to their translations. With the exception of Arthur Arberry's translation as Mahana (2000) reports, which carried the title of (The Koran Interpreted) in 1955; almost all the translators met on labeling their translations with (the Koran) or (Translation of the Quran). This was not the only error in the translation as with titles. Some of the Orientalists wrote in their introductions of their translations that they translated the text of the Quran *itself* and not its *meaning*. According to Mahana (2000), N. C. David, in his published translation entitled (The Koran: A new Translation)-published in 1956 in London, in the Penguin Classics-said in his introduction that he meant to provide the reader with a copy of the Koran in contemporary English, with explanatory footnotes in order not to change the text into some sort of interpretation rather than to give accurate translation. Jacques Berque as mentioned by Al-Lawanda (1987) in his introduction to his translation said that he had gone deeper through persistent and an ongoing studies to be at the level of the translation of the text, so that no deficiency should happen in the French text, which was expected to provide the Koran with all its linguistic and spiritual dimensions into French.

This approach as I believe was different from ideological, historical and linguistic perspectives. As from an ideological point of view, we can assert that there is no one Muslim thinker sees any possibility of simulating the Quranic text. The Muslim faith is based on the belief that the Holy Quran is a unique book, a miracle at all aspects; that all human beings, both Arab and non-Arab are unable to make one similar to it. Historically, the inability of the Arab people-despite their eloquence and rhetoric abilities-was proven when they were asked to respond to the challenge of Quran as to come with one Sura, not in the very same nature of the Quranic systems, but rather similar or closer to it.

From a linguistic point of view, the Arabic language speakers-the Arabs-were powerless to come with one similar Sura of the Quran-despite their high competence and performance in their Arabic language, which is very rich to help coining fine products of literary forms. So if this was the case with the Arabs themselves to feel helpless to imitate the Quranic style, then it must be have been the case with other languages, to also show inability and deficiency as well to make similar sura of the Quran. Why?

There are many reasons for the imitatability of the Holy Book, including: that the Arabic language has very rich vocabulary, synonyms, which we believe to have no parallel in other languages, including

the difference of Arabic syntax compared to the European languages. Also Arabic is rich in its linguistic system, in terms of pronoun indicators, masculine and feminine elements, not to mention other rhetorical techniques. The morphological and the phonological systems of Arabic according to Al-Samarrai in a TV interview (2016) - allow some linguistic structures to use expressive characteristics that can go beyond the lexical meanings. For more details about the semantic and lexical richness of the Arabic language, please watch professor Al-Samarrai TV speech who also investigated the multiplicity and expansion of the semantics and structure of phrases and words; that a single word can accommodate more than one meaning. We can use one word in order to hunt more than one meaning; when these meanings are all required, to save the speaker prolonging speech. Al-Samarrai adds that the targeted meanings can be pooled in one sentence to summarize and expand the expression. In the Quran we may go through some Quranic Verses that can afford more than one meaning in order to collect all the meanings in one concise phrase. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9RlrdVltB0>

4.2. Second: Overlooking the Arabic Text in Translation

Some approaches which were adopted by the Orientalists in translation were questionable. It is self-evident that any translation must set out from the original text. But focusing on efforts of Christianization and making war against Islam as Al-Nadawi (1998) believes; were the major factors behind most of those translations of the Quran and Islamic studies. These two factors, turned those Orientalists blind to realize the necessity for making *direct* reliable translations from the original text of the Holy Book. This idea as Al-Nadawi believes can be supported by Roger Bacon opinion that any translation must be direct from the original source-the Quran. According to Al-Nadawi (1998), the first translations of the Quranic text were originally based on the French Version translation of the Abbey of Cluny and the Italian translations. In the second phase the Orientalists based their translations on George Seale's translation in English. This means that the original Quranic text was entirely overlooked for seven centuries but was partially ignored in the nineteenth century. Al-Nadawi adds that In addition to those factors, some missionary Orientalists had their own private agendas that led to ignore the original Quranic Text; such as Arthur N. Wollaston, who said to have read the content of the Holy Quran from English and French versions due to his ignorance of the Arabic language.

4.3. Third: Re-arrangement of the Suras of the Quran

It is indisputable that the principles of translation should mean to the translators or the interpreter, the absolute commitment to transferring the system of the intended material that they intend to translate, as it is contained in the original text. This is what we usually do with texts written by-us-human beings, let alone to have a stringent commitment in the translation of Scriptures and holy texts. According to Al-Abaidi (2012), some Orientalists did not abide to this commitment and made re-arrangement of the Quranic Suras; in different ways, in their various translations. They took circuitous paths that yielded several new different systems and structures of the arrangement of the Quran. This made the versions of their translations looked as if they were translations made from several different sources, not from the *one* original known text-the Holy Quran.

This re-arranging of the Suras of the Quran appeared in different formats. These formats according to Al-Abaidi (2012) included:

- The classic arrangement of the Quran by George W. Seale and Arthur Arberry's.
- Re-arrangements of the Suras according to time of revelation: This can be traced in the translation of Edward Palmer, Rodwell and Richard Bell.
- The historical arrangement of the Suras according to the phases of the Da'awa (CALL) of the prophet—peace be upon him. These attempts began by the German Orientalist Theodor Nöldeke in his well known book "The History of the Koran" appeared in 1860. And before that there was the English translation of William Muir in the second part of his book "The Life of Muhammad" in 1896.
- The historic re-arrangement was also adopted by Régis Blachère in his translation of the Quran in 1949. Blachère according to Al-Abaidi, said in his introduction that the Quranic Suras could be divided into four groups according to the four successive periods of Mohammed's Daawa (CALL). He relied on some evidences to have included some Suras in the first phase of the

Da'awa. Then he went on to re-arrange the Suras of the Quran historically into four stages as follows:

- Meccan phase One: comprising 1-49 Suras.
- Meccan phase Two: comprising 50-70 Suras.
- Meccan phase three: comprising 71- 92 Suras
- Maddinah phase One: comprising 93- 116 Suras

According to this re-arrangement, the Quran became (116) Suras instead of the known (114), as the two Suras of (Al-aalaq and the Mudather) were divided into four Suras. This fabrication of facts was denied by all Muslims and will be; because that was not the way the Mushaf was first arranged and fixed by (Zaid ibin Thabit), who was authorized by the first Khalifa, Abu Baker Asiddeeg, to collect the Quran. Zaid attended the last recitation events of the Quran, when Gabriel-peace be upon him-used to come down to the prophet Mohammed (PBUH) before his death, to study the Quran with him. So Zaid-may Allah bless him-was sure about where each verse was to be put in the Mushaf, in its correct place.

According to Al-Zarkashi (1957), this re-arrangement of the Holy Quran by some Orientalists was not new, as (Abu al-Qasim al-Hasan ibn Habib Alnisaburi) had already mentioned such an act in his book (Al-Tanbieh Ala Fadhl Ouloum AlQuran). Al-Nisaburi talked about the most honorable type of Quranic sciences that the Muslim is obliged to learn; is the history of the revelation of the Quran; and the knowledge of the places, where each Sura had been revealed to Mohammed (peace be upon him). In addition to that is to recognize which Suras that was revealed, first or last; and where it was revealed in Makkah or Maddinah.

4.4. Fourth: Claiming Poetic Arrangement

This is about the most lawlessness systematic approach of the translations of the Quran where N.C David in his English Translation in (1956), tried to introduce a special re-arrangement of the Suras of the Quran, in which he did not abide with the classic arrangement of the Mushaf. He also violated the descent and historical order of the arrangement of the Quran which was adopted by some other Orientalists. According to Al-Malik (1996), N.C David adopted a strange re-arrangement based on two things. First, he replaced the Suras in term of length. Second, he replaced the Suras in term of some poetic characteristics as he (claimed). He translated the short Suras which he thought to have embedded the most poetic elements, and then came to the longest Suras and the least poetic according to his claim. His reason for adopting this arrangement as Al-Malik mentioned, was his desire not to burden the reader with long Sura such as (albaqrah-the calf) and (Al-Nisa-the women). So his plan was to gradually prepare and condition the reader who wanted to read the book

But many negative results came out from the adoption of such methods of translation. This was summarized by Abulela (1991) in the following points:

- This approach of translation violated the historical facts. This can be traced in the translation of the Quran by Régis Blachère who made the Quran as composed of (116) Suras instead of (114) Sura, which is the number of Suras as known in the Mushaf, a fact that combined all Muslims for fourteen centuries.
- This approach also violated the scientific objectivity, which obliged researchers and translators to be committed to the written text, in translation or research.
- On the other hand, this approach can open the door wide for personal prejudices and personal tastes, by allowing much freedom for people to deal with such issues.
- This situation created a new problem before the Quranic Text that was familiar in the history of the Quranic sciences. Such a problem could be called false problem, as the re-arrangement of the Quran had never been an issue for discrepancy, to violate the order in which the Mushaf was set.
- The Mushaf was arranged according to an agreement under the guidance of Gabriel-peace be upon him- who conveyed this to the Prophet-peace be upon him. Then the writers of the Spirit (Gabriel), put the Suras in their places, where each Sura was assigned a fixed place.

- All the Suras of the Quran were verbally arranged during the Prophet's life - peace be upon him. This arrangement of the Quranic Verses was learned directly from *him*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited the (Tankies) of the Quran-that was the recitation of the Suras in reverse order, not as fixed in the Mushaf. We are here to mention that (Zaid) was present to listen to the prophet (peace be upon him) reciting the Quran; as it was revealed to him by Gabriel twice during the year before his death.
- The arrangement of the Quran was provided to cover a human need for guidance demanded at a time of severe necessity. The human society was like a patient, whose treatment was prescribed by physicians according to the degree of the diseases. So the Quran was revealed in (installments: منجماً) during 23 years for the practical needs of human beings at that historical moment. This situation is similar to the practical need of a patient for the right dose of medicine, on the right time.

5. CONCLUSION

- We Muslim hold undoubted belief that the Quran is the Word of Allah, revealed to Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him. Then Mohammed, peace be upon him, was authorized by Allah Almighty to carry this message to all human beings, all over earth. So the message, though it was revealed in Arabic; but it was and still is universal and meant to reach all human beings: Arab and non-Arab as well.
- The challenge of the Quran was in its linguistic structure, so it was and still inimitable, and this was the first evidence with which the Prophet, peace be upon him, was able to challenge the Arabs to make one similar Sura of its kind. Although the Arabs were so eloquent and fluent in this Arabic language trade, they could not simulate the system of Quran to produce one similar sura and will still remain unable to create anything like that. So if this was the case of the Quran to defy the Arab themselves, then it would definitely be difficult for other languages to assimilate such a linguistic system in any form of translation or in any linguistic structure.
- The Quran was and still is an inimitable text, but we can render the *meaning* of its words to reach others by giving some *explanations* or *interpretations*. So all the translated version of the holy Quran, in all languages should be considered as *mere interpretations* of the Holy Book, rather than authenticated version of the original text.
- The Holy Quran which is embedded in the Mushaf as its known today was collected during the era of Abu Baker ASiddeeg, the first Muslim Caliphate, who shouldered the responsibility of the Islamic Umma after the death of Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him. So any reliable translation or interpretation of the Book should set out *directly* from this original manuscript.
- Although-there is too much literature as Siddiek (2012) put it about the untranslatability of the Quran from its Arabic text into another language; most Muslims, Arab and non-Arab, and almost everyone with some Arabic language background; will not find any difficulty to prove this fact about the difficulty of translating the Holy Book into another language.
- The Quran is the Word of Allah Almighty to his messenger Mohammed- peace be upon him. It was intentionally revealed in Arabic to serve specific purpose: to defy the Arabs in their *own trade* and *craftsmanship* to produce highly similar rhetorical and poetic composition in their own literature. The revelation of the Quran took place at that *moment* in history when the Arabic language reached the peak of its *maturity* and was ready to assimilate the contents of the Holy Text.
- Although all the scientific, geographical and historical facts mentioned in the Quran have been found true, nevertheless, the Quran remains a book of miracles, but its miraculous ability is in its inimitability (as no one has made similar Sura the like of it since its revelation) and its untranslatability into another form of reproduction in other languages (as hundreds of translations were made and are still made, but would not come to the absolute final perfect form of the original text. The challenge of Quran is based on the refined style of the Arabic language and linguistic capacity and capability. We conclude with (Siddiek:2012) that these translations are incomplete, as they are mere human efforts.
- So far this paper has discussed some problems with approaches of some of the Orientalists translations of the Quran; and provided opinions of some Islamic scholars on the issue of the inimitability and untranslatability of the Holy Book.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Islam is a universal religion and the Quran is the WORD of Allah to his messenger Mohammed –peace be upon him. It was revealed in 23 years in *installments* to reach all the corners of the earth and to deal gradually with all expected human needs at that time. But its message is still suitable to cover all human needs on earth. The Quran was revealed in Arabic but it was intended to reach every human soul through the translation of its meanings. The majority of Muslim scholars agreed on this issue of translating the *meanings* of the Holy Quran. This paper has reflected some ideas about this topic and to conclude this essay I would like to suggest the following recommendations concerning the issue of the *translation of the meanings of the Holy Quran* into most of the world living languages:

- Since translation is a skill and different versions of the same source can be made by many people, I would suggest that the efforts of translating the Holy Book should be *pooled* towards the translation of the Book in *one* specific language to be done by a group of language specialists under the supervision of Islamic Scholars (Fuqha- فقهاء)
- Establishing translation Units in the Departments of Foreign Languages in Islamic Universities to *academically* deal with the translations of the Holy Quran in different languages, from different perspectives.
- Holding annual conferences to provide papers about the translations of the holy Quran in different places in the Islamic and non-Islamic world.
- Universities and higher institutes of Islamic studies should be consulted as references to all Quranic studies and Quranic issues.
- Encouraging foreign scholars and specialist professors to exchange visits and ideas with their counterparts in the Islamic World.
- Providing translation courses of the Holy Quran in language departments in Universities and higher institutes of translations such as King Fahd School of Translation in Morocco and the Islamic Institute of Translation in Khartoum-Sudan and The Azhar University-Departments of Translations in Egypt.
- Encouraging researchers in Islamic and language studies to read for higher diplomas and higher degrees in investigating the foreign translations of the Quranic Text in foreign languages.
- Islamic governments and decisions makers should seriously take this issue as a part of their religious duty (فرض عين) to help spread of the right message of Islamic Religion and Islamic culture to all human beings on earth.
- There were many Western Scholars who were fair towards Islam and Quran. We need to shed more light on their works and studies they made on the Quranic Text such as Dr. Maurice Bucaille. This man's works were and still of great value to both Muslim and non-Muslim to reveal the fact about the Islamic religion. Here is a quotation of how he defended Islamic Values when he was asked about::
What are your views about the Quran in this behalf?

"Now this is a matter of entirely a different nature. All scholars of the Quran are unanimous that the Quran is the "Word of God" as revealed to His Last Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W.) through Gabriel (The Angel of Revelation). I have studied the Book (Quran) very carefully and have not come across one single instance of scientific fallacy anywhere in it. On the contrary, I have felt that the (higher) truths and realities inherent in Quranic Text have been, throughout the history of 1400 years, beyond the comprehension of ordinary human beings which in itself, is positive proof that the Quran is the Word of God and it is (at places) beyond intellectual potential of mortal man; be he an excellent scholar or philosopher of the highest caliber, who is not always able to explain the inherent realities of nature as revealed in the Quran. What obviously conflicts with scientific truth is the assumption of the Bible that although life erupted in the form of various species, which have endured, there has been no evolution or improvement in their functions. On the other hand according to the Quran, Man has transgressed through gigantic changes in the course of the entire history of humanity. I felt it very necessary to inform the Christians of the world of this very serious discrepancy in the Bible. As it happen to be impartial, truthful and very outspoken in my studies, I have been repeatedly called upon from time to time to express my views regarding these matters before distinguished gatherings. On all such occasions, I have always dealt with the subject from

the scientific point of view, ignoring the ecclesiastic or theological context. Whatever has appeared to be dubious or fit for further investigation, I have tried to put it on the touchstone of criticism and have not allowed to pass it unchallenged."

See: http://www.islamicbulletin.org/newsletters/issue_6/embraced.aspx.

At the end of this article I need to mention the names of Dr. Abdulradhi bin Mohammed bin Abdul-Mohsin and Dr. Shaker Alim Ishtiaq of the Islamic University in Sheta Gong University, whose papers-in Arabic-have provided me with most of the ideas of this research.

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Citation: Dr. Ahmed Gumaa Siddiek. "Review of Some Orientalists' Approaches used in the Translation of the Holy Quran" *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, vol 6, no. 4, 2018, pp. 38-53. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0604005>.

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