

THE CHALLENGES AND NUANCES OF TRANSLATING ISLAMIC TERMINOLOGY

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Annotation. The translation of Islamic terminology presents unique challenges due to the deep cultural and religious context embedded within the Arabic language. This article explores the complexities involved in rendering Islamic terms into other languages, highlighting the importance of accuracy, context, and cultural sensitivity. It examines the difficulties in finding equivalent terms, the risks of misinterpretation, and the crucial role of qualified translators in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps.

Keywords: islamic terminology, translation nuances, cultural sensitivity, linguistic challenges.

INTRODUCTION.

The translation of Islamic terminology is far more than a simple linguistic exercise. It involves navigating a complex web of religious, cultural, and historical nuances. The Arabic language, as the vehicle of the Qur'an, carries a profound spiritual weight for Muslims. Consequently, translating terms like "Allah," "Iman," or "Salat" requires a deep understanding of their theological implications. Several factors contribute to the difficulty of this task: Lack of Direct Equivalents: Many Islamic terms have no precise counterparts in other languages. This necessitates careful consideration of the context and the intended meaning.

Cultural Context. Islamic terminology is deeply rooted in Arab culture. Translating these terms requires an understanding of the cultural context in which they originated. Theological Sensitivity: Religious texts demand utmost accuracy. misinterpretations can have significant theological implications.

Even within the Islamic tradition, some terms may have varied interpretations among different schools of thought.

The process of translating Islamic terminology encounters numerous linguistic and cultural hurdles. Arabic words often possess multiple meanings (polysemy) requiring translators to discern the intended sense based on the context. For instance, the word "jihad" has been subject to various interpretations.

The Qur'an and Hadith contain idiomatic expressions that are difficult to translate literally. Translators must find equivalent expressions that convey the same meaning and tone. Differences in cultural values and worldviews can lead to misunderstandings. Translators must be aware of these gaps and strive to bridge them. Sometimes translators will transliterate a word instead of translating it, which can be useful, but can also lead to confusion for those who do not understand the original arabic.

Accurate translation of Islamic terminology hinges on a thorough understanding of the context in which the terms are used. Translators must carefully analyze the surrounding text to determine the precise meaning of a term.

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Consulting with Islamic scholars and experts in Arabic language and Islamic studies is essential for ensuring accuracy. Translators must consider the background and understanding of their target audience. This will influence their choice of words and explanations. When translating religious texts, the translator must always keep in mind the potential impact of their work. A translator has a large responsibility to be accurate, and unbiased. In general, both strategies can be used in translating cultural terms.

However, the foreignization strategy appeared to be better in conveying the meaning from the domestication strategy. The domestication strategy can be used in only few cases as it is difficult to find an equivalent for cultural terms. As seen from the examples, the domestication strategy succeeded in conveying the meaning in some cases, conveyed the meaning but not in full in other cases and sometimes failed to transfer the meaning. In contrast, the foreignization strategy succeeded in conveying the meaning in almost all examples. It preserved the source culture and transferred it to the target culture which gave the readers the opportunity to learn new words from other cultures.

Unlike the domesticated terms, the meaning of the foreignized terms was clearly explained and transferred by using footnotes. Although the equivalent terms used in the domestication strategy seems equivalent and natural, their meanings in the target language are completely different from their meanings in the source culture. As a result, the translators are advised to use the foreignization strategy in translating cultural words unless they were able to find an equivalent term in the TL that conveys the exact meaning.

Conclusion

The translation of Islamic terminology is a delicate and demanding task. It requires a combination of linguistic expertise, cultural sensitivity, and theological understanding. The risks of misinterpretation are significant, underscoring the importance of relying on qualified translators and scholarly resources.

As the global Muslim community continues to grow, the need for accurate and accessible translations of Islamic texts will only increase. By prioritizing accuracy, context, and cultural sensitivity, translators can play a vital role in fostering greater understanding and appreciation of Islam. Furthermore, it is important for those receiving translated material to understand that translations, by nature, are interpretations, and that there will always be some level of nuance that is lost in the translation process.

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