

**A Concise Review of the Translatability of the Quranic Text:  
Hilali and Khan's English Version**

**Mohammad Amin Hawamdeh, Ph.D.**

Faculty of Arts, Jerash University, Jordan

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to concisely review the translatability of the Quranic text with special reference to an officially approved yet heavily criticized English version. Based on both old and new notions and opinions, the study synthetically describes and discusses how translatable the Quran is and to what extent it is necessary and/or permissible to translate a highly claimed-to-be holy word of God—as kept intact since revealed—into such a completely different language and culture as English. The sample case of this study is Hilali and Khan's Translation (=HKT) as the latest English interpretation (of the meanings) of the Quran produced in 1996. Sealed and approved by the most esteemed religious authority in the Muslim world, the HKT is assessed and investigated in terms of its history, contents and criticism. Just like any manuscript or piece of language, the Quranic text can be generally translated and interpreted; in point of fact, its being rendered into a foreign language(s) is still necessary and, hence, to be permissible for the universal call of Islam. Eventually, the HKT is obviously a literal version of the Quran yet with too many parenthetical additions and explanatory footnotes. However, such additions should neither cause controversy on the main TL text nor be accused of distorting the Quranic message.

**Keywords:** The Quran, Translation/Translatability, Hilali and Khan, Addition in Parentheses, Arabic-English.

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## **1. Introduction**

To attain a translation measuring up to the source-language (SL) text is more difficult or sensitive in case of a sacred, religious context. Translating the Arabic version of the Quran—as highly claimed and commonly insisted to be the only authentic one—has been always a controversial issue. It is argued not to be easily/simple reproduced into another language (cf. Aslan, 2008; Ghazalah, 2008; Khan, 2008; Khalaf and Zulkifli, 2011; Siddiek, 2012; Peachy, 2013; Hawamdeh, 2017). Essentially based on exegesis, to translate the Quran is "at least is based on an understanding of the text and, consequently, projects a certain point of view" (Baker, 2001: 201). A word in Arabic might have a set of meanings on the basis of its context, and its being rendered is neither to be "the labor [...] of common minds" (Kasperek, 1983: 87) nor to do with any human beliefs or ideologies. This sensitivity is maximized if the target-language (TL) is of a completely different linguistic typology and/or cultural background such as English (Yaquub, 2014: 229).

The text of the Quran has been rendered into many different languages spoken in the world throughout ages. From a historical perspective, Salman the Persian—a companion of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)—was the first to translate a Quranic text into Persian for a diplomatic purpose (Faiq, 2004: 91). Reported at an international exhibition in 2010 in Tehran, the Quran has been presented in 112 languages. Its first translation into Latin was by Robert of Ketton in 1143 during the Crusades (Elmarsafy, 2009 cited in Brakhw and Ismail, 2014: 96; Gázquez and Gray, 2007), and from French into English by Alexander Ross in 1688 (Bloom and Blair, 2002: p. 42). In 1734, another version of the Quran was presented into English as "a remarkably accurate guide to the literal meanings" of the Quran (Barnes, 2011: 47) by George Sale—after whom skepticism towards Islam could not be masked in translation (Hayes, 2004: 249). The first English version of the Quran by a Muslim translator was carried out by Abdul-Hakeem Khan in 1905.<sup>5</sup>

In light of the importance of the Quran as the only sacred book of a large portion of the world's population, its many various translations must be systematically reviewed. Despite revealed in Arabic, the Quranic discourse is oriented to all nations and all cultures. Many misunderstandings about it have arisen from its non-Arabic versions as many people are learning it through translation. This study presents a concise review of the translatability of the Quranic text with special reference to a latest English co-interpretation of the Quran by Muslim translators as a case. The translation of the Quran—titled as "*The Noble Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*"—by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al Hilali and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (1996) is published by King Fahd Complex as officially sealed by the Islamic authority in Saudi Arabia (hereinafter as the "HKT").<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the present study is more or less limited to:

1. the language of religion in 'holy' texts as well as any other types of texts with a *Quranic genre*, e.g. poetry and/or prose, a blend of which the text of the Quran is basically made of, and
2. the translation(s) from classical Arabic as a synthetic Semitic language into modern English as an analytic Germanic one carried out by said-to-be proficient translators.

## 2. Translation of the Quranic Text

Having played an important role in the history of and global call to Islam, translating the Arabic text of the Quran into another language has been always an issue of controversy. This issue has started since the dawn of Islam and has highly erupted as the Quran was introduced to regions where the mother tongue is not Arabic and many non-Arabic speaking people espoused Islam. The Quran is believed to be the word of God; translating this holy Book is not only a need for the

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<sup>5</sup> Many other English translations appeared later on (Khan, 1997: 30-31), among of which are Marmaduke Pickthall (1930), Yusuf Ali (1934), Arthur J. Arberry (1955), N. J. Daawood (1956), M. M. Khatib (1986) and T. B. Irving (1992).

<sup>6</sup> Revised and edited (or, say, officially approved) by the Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA, Call and Guidance in Saudi Arabia.

non-Arabic speaking communities but it is also a necessity to make its message accessible to all other peoples of the world. What makes it difficult to translate is that Arabic contains a lot of characteristics; it is a rich language with metaphors, rhymes, rhythms and many other things. The discourse of the Quran is "linguistic scenery characterized by a rainbow of syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, phonetic and cultural features that are distinct from other types of Arabic discourse" (Raof, 2001, cited in Faiq, 2004: 92). Generally speaking, the Quran can be really translated into any other language but with grave losses.

Several conditions might suggest it is unapproachable to translate the Quranic text based on the inevitable loss of meaning and lexical idiosyncrasies. For its unsurpassable meaning and expression, it is not possible to completely translate the language of the Quran into any other language. Any translation would create a great amount of tension between the translated text and the religious values to be communicated. In his preface to an English translation of the Quran, Pickthall (1961: vii) states that "the Quran cannot be translated. [...]. The book is here rendered almost literally and every effort has been made to choose befitting language. But the result is not the Glorious Quran [...]. It is only an attempt to present the meaning of the Quran." To an extent that the most vital characteristics of the Quran are lost in any translation of it, the Quran is seen to have inimitable symphony (Arberry, 1982: x), sublime grandeur of form (Zarqani, 2001: 583) and rhetorical beauty (Yusuf Ali, 1983: iv).

A set of concerns has also existed in terms of the Quranic translatability. The extremely individual qualities—*i.e. highly idiomatic yet delusively simple language and impressively eloquent rhythms and rhymes*—of the Quranic text make it inimitable (Arberry, 1982: 9). The many translators and translation analysts have always wondered whether or not it is permissible to:

1. transform the divine word of God into a man-made text that could claim any level of equivalency to the Quran,
2. avoid any kind of change and distortion in the message of the Quran as a result of the translating process,
3. for new believers, highly depend on the translations instead of learning the Arabic text and
4. not lose the inimitable quality of the original text into the translated text.

This all would entail that the Quranic text cannot be or is *not* possible to be imported in another language or form. This also makes translators hesitate as it comes to translate the Quran. It also entails that the non-Arabic versions are thus, necessarily, no longer to possess the uniquely sacred character of the Arabic original. Such versions are preferably called to be only interpretations or translations of the meanings (cf. Fatani, 2006; Ahmed, 2004: 197). The language of the Quran is of stylistic and semantic implications and dimensions of emphasis, exaggeration and rhetoric (Ghazalah, 2008: 25-26). Thus, it is as absolutely holy and sacred and

has to be respected as the meanings of the Quran. This means that any cultural, figurative or other aspects of language have to be preserved verbatim as much as possible in the TL and any language-related change would cause a change of the stylistic dimensions and semantic implications of the SL text.

Any competent translator of the Quran should have a finely tuned sense of as to metaphrase (i.e. translate literally) and to paraphrase. That is definitely for assuring true rather than spurious equivalents between the SL and TL texts (Kasperek, 1983: 135; Vahid et al. 2011: 340). In addition, it is not conceivable for the translator to ignore (or consider as peripheral and optional) the underlying cultural and associative meanings implied in different features of style (i.e. stylistic meaning). Therefore, the translator in this field is necessarily bilingual and bicultural, having a very good knowledge of the language from which he translates and an excellent command of the language into which he translates. He should be well-acquainted with the subject matter of the text translated, keeping himself free of any kind of bias/prejudice (Riazi, 2002: 13; Khan, 2008: 98).

Some Muslim scholars oppose the translation of the Quran whereas others support it (cf. Siddiq, 1994; Najdat, 1998: 308-309):

1. The translation of the Quran into another language was prohibited by Ibn Taymiya, Al Nawawi and Ibn Qudamah (Siddiek, 2012: 21). In this respect, Rahman (1988) indicates that an English interpretation of the Quranic text is "impeded because of the Quranic style and expression and due to the fact that the Quran is not really a single book but an assembly of all the passages revealed to [Prophet] Muhammad" (p. 24). It is "an identical style so that of the language of the Quran will never be achieved in a translation" (Raof, 2001, 52). The same point is also stressed by Irving (1992) stating that "the Quran could be considered untranslatable, because each time one returns to the Arabic text, he finds new meanings and fresh ways of interpreting" (p. 27). In fact, the message of Islam is deemed to be universal; therefore, one may wonder how this message could reach the world without being translated!
2. The other party believes that translating the Quran is a call to Islam worldwide. It is an integral part of the Prophet Muhammad's command to convey the Islamic message (Peachy, 2013: 32) since it is basically believed that the Quran was intended to be to all nations around the globe. To translate the Quran has also become a necessity as interfering or exchanging any cultural content requires translation; that is particularly "in the area of what each culture holds as sacred or holy resist translation since the space it needs in the target language is often already occupied" (Long, 2005: 1). A verdict (*fatwa*) finally issued by Al Azhar University in Egypt in 1936 provides that the Quran is only in Arabic and any translation cannot be considered a substitute. This verdict entails that the translations of the Quran into any other languages are necessarily works of humans; they

are not reliable in isolation from the original text as they are affected by the translator's own thoughts (Irving, 1992: 30).

In spite of the inimitable nature of the Quran, this sacred text has been translated and retranslated for various purposes (Barnes, 2011 cited in Brakhw and Ismail, 2014: 96) into most languages of the world. Furthermore, Qadhi (1999) argues that given the different languages in the world "it has become necessary to translate this sacred text from Arabic into other languages so that more readers can access and benefit from the translation of the Quran" (p. 348). To render the Quran has been an issue of hated debate among scholars, almost around an indirect point that the basic task of a language is to put the meaning into words. The long debate among the Muslim scholars on the translation of the Quran actually raises the question of how legitimate the translation of the Quran is. Eventually, some translations are better in their linguistic quality while others are noted for their exactness in portraying the meaning. In this spirit, every translation "proclaims its own inadequacy and is not more than an approximation of the Quranic meanings" (Tibawi, 1964: 9).

In light of the recent literature on translating the Quranic text, the following related studies are referred to:

- Khan (2008) emphasized that the Quranic message could not be effectively communicated by translation. Arguing that "no two languages have the exact equivalence with reference to their cultural and conventional norms" (p. 227), he found that:
  - o dynamic equivalence simplifies the Quranic meanings,
  - o grammatical ambiguity results in misinterpretation with a displeasing effect,
  - o idiomatic rendering can fulfill a TL reader's expectations for better communication,
  - o syntactic and lexical expansions to fill up ellipses reduce communication load,
  - o rendering a figurative expression by word-for-word rewriting spoils the true sense of the Quran,
  - o temporal and spatial differences multiply the rendering difficulties, and
  - o to preserve a sense of balance between loyalty to the SL and the TL expectations is challenging.
- Khalaf and Zulkifli (2011) argued that the translations of the Quran seem to maintain at a high degree certain limitations of translatability in lexicon, semantics, structure, rhetoric and culture. They found that:
  - o some lexical items are Quran-specific or cultural expressions as strongly connected to the SL culture and have no equivalents in the TL,
  - o the syntactic structure of a language usually represents its linguistic pattern as the word order is often fixed in ordinary situations following framed grammatical patterns and

- the Quranic discourse is characterized by numerous rhetorical features such as alliteration, antithesis, metaphor, oxymoron and repetition.
- Shedding light on the opinions of some Islamic scholars as to the translatability of the Quran, Siddiek (2012) stressed that translating the meanings is permissible in the human context but this translation (i) is not free of error and weakly renders the SL text and (ii) leads to depart the Book as non-Arabic readers resort to the translations and, hence, have more divisions of thought. The following types of translation were found:
  - to literally translate by replacing a word with another equivalent one while keeping the SL structure, layout and style,
  - to translate the meaning(s) by replacing the word with a similar word(s) being of a nearly/totally equivalent meaning regardless of dependency or farness from the SL features, and
  - to (dynamically) interpret the SL text on the basis of one's common exegesis and world of knowledge.
- Moreover, Saleem (2013) addressed the pitfalls and difficulties encountered in English versions of the Quran as carried out by Muslims/non-Muslim translators. Among such pitfalls were the lack of knowledge of Arabic, lack of knowledge of literary English, sectarian biases and distortions and lack of scientific knowledge. He also argued that no one could meet the ideal translation and the need arises for taking up the task afresh.
- For the TL audience of the Quranic message, Peachy (2013) argued that the primary audience is the literate, unsophisticated native speakers of English (Peachy, p. 52). He mentioned that Yusuf Ali's translation was aimed at an audience who could understand the archaic style of English, Dawood wanted to convey both the meaning and the rhetorical grandeur of the original in a practical manner and Irving aimed his work at a new generation of English-speaking Muslim readership. Undesirable, too, was a style that hindered the understanding of an unsophisticated non-Arabic reader. In fact, the aim of Peachy's investigation was not to imitate the inimitable style of the Quran at all (p. 51).

### 3. Hilali and Khan's Translation

#### 3.1 Overview and Description

As the fifteenth revised edition published in 1996, the sample translation of the Quran is titled as *The Noble Quran: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*. It is a co-translation of the Quran into the modern English language by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud Din Al Hilali and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, formerly Professor of Islamic Faith and Teachings and Director of University Hospital at the Islamic University in Madinah, KSA, respectively.<sup>7</sup> Also given the title of *The Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English*

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<sup>7</sup> The two translators are introduced as *Salafi* (defined as the traditional followers of Prophet Muhammad's way). Hilali and Khan translated the Quran after they had translated Saheeh Al Bukhari into English in 1969 in nine volumes (see Khan, 1981: Vol. 2, 460, Ch. 132: 795-798).

*Language*," the HKT is sponsored by the Saudi government; it was published by King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran in Madinah, KSA. Also, it comes with a seal of approval from both the Islamic University itself and the Saudi Arabian Dar Al Ifta (cf. Mohammed, 2005; Fadl, 2005; Schwartz, 2004).

One of the most widespread translations of the Quran in the English-speaking countries, the HKT is intended to present the Quran meanings in the way the early Muslims had known it. It is recommended by most Saudi scholars and it is more popular among the Salafi groups or, say, the Muslims preferring to understand the meanings of the Quran only by a literal and traditional approach based on the early Muslims' understanding. This translation into English is based upon classical sources of commentaries of the Quran, namely Al Tabari, Al Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir. It also relies upon quotes from Saheeh Al Bukhari. In fact, Saudi Arabia sponsors the printing and distribution of millions of versions of the HKT throughout the world on an annual basis. In addition, many Muslim scholars favor this translation because it does not use archaic language and its style is highly considered to be better than the popular other translations. The HKT has been "preferred by the Muslim scholars as it is translated by (Dr. Hilali as) an Arab translator and (Dr. Khan as) a Muslim scholar who mastered English" (Jabari, 2008: 10).

Historically, the HKT went through several editions by different publishers in several countries. It was first published in Istanbul, Turkey in 1974 (and was reissued in 1976 and in 1978). The Arabic text was reproduced from the calligraphy of Sheikh Hamid Al Amadi, prepared under the direction of Badiuzzamaan Said Nursi, copyrighted by Hizmet Trust in Istanbul, appearing on the right hand side page as the English translation appears on the left hand page of the work (Hilali and Khan, 1993: ii). The full title of the former translation was "*The Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language: A Summarized Version of Al Tabari, Al Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir with Comments from Saheeh Al Bukhari Summarized in One Volume.*" Thereafter, the HKT was published in Chicago, USA in 1977. This second edition came under the title of "*The Explanatory English Translation of the Meanings of the Holy Quran*" by Hilali and M. Khan. Supplemented by Al Tabari's and comments from Saheeh Al Bukhari, it was intended to be a summarized English version of Ibn Kathir's exegesis. After the publication of the edition of 1978, the work continued as the translators had been then getting it well revised and edited.

Having been correcting the English rendition of Saheeh Al Bukhari, "Hilali and Khan used to come across the translation of the meanings of some verses of the Quran" (Hilali and Khan, 1993: xi). Some were found to be wrongly translated and others needed clarification. Having completed their aforesaid work, the translators decided to translate the meanings of the Quran in isolation from the other numerous English translations—although the changes made therein were few and non-substantial.<sup>8</sup> For about seven years, they had basically worked on the

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<sup>8</sup> In fact, "Hilali and Khan make no acknowledgement of benefiting from earlier translations in the field although a cursory look at their translation shows deep influences and heavy dependency on them" (Jassem, 2014: 268).

entire project for preparing two forms of their revised version. One is a summarized one-volume translation and the other is in a detailed form as an expanded nine-volume one (Hilali and Khan, 1993: vi). Having made their decision, Hilali and Khan attempted to make their translation in light of the faith of Prophet Muhammad's companions. Their version was an attempt for correcting the serious mistakes in previous translations due to misunderstood meaning(s). An edition was published in 1993 by Dar-us Salam Publishers in Riyadh, KSA.

Accused of being amplified, the HKT often uses the brackets and parentheses so to explain the meaning of the Quranic verses. Some original words being difficult to render into English are kept in their own Arabic but described inside parentheses (using many insertions and interpolations). In this respect, Saleem (2013) states that the HKT is firstly produced as intended "to present the interpretation of the meaning of the Quran in its pristine form and not in the best English style" (p. 82). From another yet relevant perspective, the HKT is meant to be a substitute of that made by Yusuf Ali. It seems to be the most popular and most widely disseminated and beautifully printed English interpretation of the meanings of the Quran (Jassem, 2014: 237). It is distributed for free in most Islamic bookstores and Sunni mosques all through the regions of the world where English is a mother tongue and nearly in every Islamic center in the United States of America (Fadl, 2005).

The latest edited version of the HKT is that of 1996. It is the one the present study actually concerned itself with, titled *The Noble Quran: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*. In terms of the content of this Translation, the printed text could be generally categorized into three main parts:

1. With an initial ornamental part of six unnumbered pages on the title, sponsor, publisher and contents, the front matter includes a letter of authentication by the Saudi General President of Islamic Research, IFTA, Call and Guidance, a forward by the Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs and Endowments and a preface of the HKT (Hilali and Khan, 1996: i-vi).
2. The main body includes the text of the Quran as translated into English by Hilali and Khan (Hilali and Khan, 1996: 1-856):
  - a) The original text is Arabic is provided in one column whereas on the opposite one is a verse-to-verse English translation.
  - b) Also, there are Hadith-reports at the bottom of almost every page purporting to make clear and explain upon the translated text.
3. The back matter includes a list of the places of prostration, a list of God's prophets, a glossary, various texts on prophethood, monotheism, confession, atheism/polytheism and hypocrisy, a letter on Prophets Jesus and Muhammad (PBUT), a brief index of the Verses, a calligraphic definition of the HKT and a table of the Surahs (Hilali and Khan, 1996: 857). A final ornamental part includes information about the publisher and sponsor(s) of the HKT.

To conclude, this one-volume version of the HKT is of special features, either according to a reader/researcher or as described by Hilali and Khan. In this respect, the translated book:

- a) opens from right to left but reads from left to right on account of the English script, the matter which makes turning pages be awkward or uncomfortable to an English-speaking reader;
- b) uses easily understandable English yet with many words only transliterated, the matter which makes the text incoherent;
- c) often inserts long phrases and sentences in parentheses that explain the SL meanings but might cause confusion; and
- d) is heavily criticized for its too many interpolations and is, hence, accused of distorting the Quranic message.

### ***3.2 Recent Criticisms of the HKT***

Heavily criticized worldwide, the HKT has been seen as a "shocking [translation] in its distortions of the Quranic message and amounts to a rewrite not a translation" (Musaji, 2006). It is noticeable that this translation includes numerous interpolations in some specific contexts that cause problems, either for non-Muslims willing to learn about Islam or Muslims who struggle to show that Islam is a religion of tolerance. The most important reason behind the choice of the HKT is that it appears as an amplified translation. Its many interpolations in the HKT are more than excessive; they are seen to make the text very difficult to follow and often distort rather than amplify the meaning, instead of having the text clarified or a word or phrase that cannot be easily translated into English explained (Musaji, 2006). It is additionally seen as a bold fusion of faithfulness to the word of Allah on the one hand and is a sheer invention of the Quran on the other hand. It is seen by Crane (2012) "a piece of propaganda—known as the Wahhabi Quran—that is perhaps the most extremist translation ever made of the Quran."

The HKT is also thought to be the most extremist translation ever made of the Quran (Crane, 2012) or a Trojan-horse translation (Fadl, 2005). Despite the fact that most other translators have tried to render the Holy Quran applicable to a modern readership (Mohammed, 2005), this HKT is found to be problematic due to the numerous interpolations that are seen to, at least, prevent an effort exerted for showing the tolerance of Islam and followed by extremely long footnotes justifying the 'Sense of Hate' based on traditions from medieval texts. In the same respect, Imad-ud-Din Ahmad, head of Bethesda's Minaret of Freedom Institute, stated that "I could not find an American Muslim who had anything good to say about that edition [i.e. HKT]. I would call it a Wahhabi Koran" (Murphy, 2006). The HKT is even seen to "read more like a supremacist Muslim, anti-Semitic and anti-Christian polemic than to render the Islamic scripture" (Mohammed, 2005).

In actual fact, this HKT provides a lot of additional information within the TL text. The translators allege that such parenthetical additions (put in round/square brackets) come for the sake

of clarity or explicitation as in "...nor shall they be returned to the worldly life, (so that they repent to Allah)" (Quran, 45: 35). In fact, they have been a source of much language- and culture-associated controversy from either a linguistic, theological or, say, theo-linguistic perspective as this HKT has been criticized by several Muslim scholars. For instance, it has been taken by:

- Mohammed (2005) to "task for reading more like a supremacist Muslim, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian polemic than a rendition of the Islamic scripture;"
- Musaji (2006) to "present the most narrow-minded interpretation possible [and...] to purposefully distort and hide the beauty of Islam;" and
- Schwartz (2014) to "insert verbiage hostile to non-Muslims [and] add language aggravating Muslim-Jewish controversies."

Having evaluated the HKT on several linguistic and non-linguistic levels, Jassem (2014) found it neither to reflect the majestic grandeur of the SL text nor imitate the elegance of English. He argued that its style could be seen as literal, repetitive and documentative with too many sentential links and bracketed connectives. Having carried out a few interviews as a kind of public evaluation for measuring readers' attitudes, Jassim found that the end product was too literal and of no good practical value; its English was not only weak and awkward but also found to repel the reader from the text and, thus, discourage him/her to carry on the joy of reading and learning. The translation was found to be replete with grammatical, lexical and stylistic errors, mostly due to language transfer, overgeneralizations, ignorance of rule restrictions, and language/faith loyalty. Grammatically, the translation was found to be morphologically good except for some few derivational errors; however, the syntactic side of the translation was riddled with various errors in several categories including: missing, substitutive, literal, additional and inconsistent usages. Lexically, the text was found to be readily comprehensible; however:

- some words were archaic or too technical,
- many words were rendered imprecisely or translated literally verbatim regardless of the TL structure,
- repetition was very common on a lexical scale, making the translational style very awkward,
- circumlocution (redundancy) was obvious in using too long, periphrastic expressions as in using several TL words for one SL word,
- hundreds of Arabic loan words were kept in their Arabic original forms,
- too many insertions were unnecessarily added, making it too lengthy, dull and boring (p. 253) and
- recurrent words were variably rendered despite being of the same meaning.

Despite being alleged to be only for the sake of clarity, the parenthetical comments (interpolations or textual additions in brackets) in this amplified HKT are largely controversial. In other words, the notion made by this HKT is that "the reader is not only receiving the insights of the authors as to the meaning of the Quran, but is also receiving the insights and implicit endorsement of the text by the esteemed classical scholars" (Fadl, 2005). The translated text has all the appearances as only confirmed by the too many interjections in the regular English text placed in parentheses. They can be considered by a person who is not familiar with Arabic as "natural elaborations upon the intended meaning of the Divine text" (Fadl, 2005). Actually, the HKT is seen as a representation of the points of view and outlooks adopted by the scholars of the Saudi Dar Al-Ifta or, say, "a faithful reproduction of Bin Bazz's extremely conservative and intolerant views" (Fadl, 2005). The Saudi scholars as having approved such a translation of the Quran are seen by Crane (2012) to be "plumbing the depths of darkness."

Having published another translation of the Quran that is actually deemed to be an improved version of the HKT, Saheeh International states that "in spite of the amendments by Hilali and Khan in their translation, there remain certain drawbacks. [...] It is further complicated by the inclusion of explanatory additions and Tafsir within the lines of English text to the extent that a reader unfamiliar with the Arabic original [text] often has difficulty distinguishing one from the other" (Saheeh International, 1997: ii). Revising the HKT is to see many words are kept in Arabic, i.e. only transliterated as in "...pleased with the believers when they gave the Bai'ah (pledge)" (Quran, 48: 18), the matter which is "not always beneficial to one who cannot easily recognize the relationship between the given meanings and cannot discern which of them would be most suitable to a particular context" (Saheeh International, 1997: ii). For such words, their meanings or English equivalents are either provided in footnotes or within the text in parentheses.

Adding much material in parentheses, the HKT is seen to cause both dispute and confusion to those who are neither familiar with Arabic nor even prepared to critically read this translation (cf. Schwartz, 2014). Hilali and Khan are said to have produced their English rendition "with the attention to present the interpretation of the meaning of the Quran in its pristine form and not in the best English style" (Saleem, 2013: 82). However, Sirhani (1998: 7) was an exception; he claimed that this translation is the best, but without any substantial evidence. In actual fact, the Quranic text can be interpreted rather than rendered into another language due to the so-claimed inimitability (e.g. Schub, 2003: 81-85). The problems and pitfalls in rendering the Quranic text into English are as follows: lack of knowledge of the Arabic language, lack of knowledge of literary English, the sectarian biases and lack of scientific knowledge (Saleem, 2013: 79).

The subject HKT is more acceptable than it is an adequate English interpretation of the Quranic text since the optional and technical TAIps prevail to their obligatory and pragmatic counterparts respectively. At a large-scale level, however, and in agreement with Yaqub (2014:

229), it is more to be considered as an adequate one as the linguistic type of explicitation was more frequent than the referential one; in other words, the HKT closely sticks to SL lexis and syntax and pays respect to the SL context, construes and still explains it more than it hands the TL readers almost everything on a plate and adapts the SL text for achieving an equivalent effect as to the TL time and space. This all could eventually add to the consideration that the HKT is to a great extent a literal, unbiased and unprejudiced English interpretation of the Quranic text (Hawamdeh, 2017).

Considered as an undesirable or even repulsive English version of the Quran, the HKT is accused of being "affiliated with an extremist institution, the Islamic University of Medina" (Schwartz, 2014). Its translators are said to have projected their own inadequacies upon the Quran and, thus, entirely deformed the Islamic intellectual tradition (Fadl, 2005). Unlike that of Yusuf Ali as perhaps the most respected English interpretation of the Quran, the HKT is evaluated as repulsive or repelling. It is dissatisfactory in terms of both "style and language [as being] too poor and simplistic" (Jassem, 2014: 269). Schwartz (2014) describe this "Saudi version" to add to the original text in Arabic so as to notably change its sense in a radical direction, even though the Quran is to Muslims an unalterable sacred text dictated by Allah. Upon the same, Musaji (2006) strongly recommends that "every copy [of the HKT] is removed from [...] the United States."

To conclude this section, the HKT is still a constitutively principled set of occurrences. It is a literal interpretation of the Quran and its many TAIps help perceive the linguistic sense and realize the cultural world of the Quran as rendered into a completely different system and background (e.g. English). This text looks cohesive but might not be a coherently and intentionally relational unit of communication. The linguistic items of which it is lexically and grammatically made are meaningfully interconnected in sequences; however, the concepts within a text as well as the relations among them and to the external world are developed so an identifiable goal is intentionally attained. Being cohesive and coherent and to a large extent probable or expected to a potential TL reader, the text with the too many TAIps in it does not seem to of relevance to the situation although it depends on the knowledge of other texts. Anyhow, to improve an existing English translation of the Quran or develop a new one as the meanings are not narrowed down to specific ideas is still a high need (cf. Peachy, 2013).

#### 4. Conclusion

Despite the fact that the vast majority of Muslims nowadays are not native speakers of Arabic, the Quran is believed to be inseparable from and to be even recited only in Arabic. The relation between the Quran and Arabic is extraordinarily strong; to take the Quran out of its original context is a controversially challenging endeavor. However, Islam has yielded to pressure to open the Quranic text up to foreign readers despite the high eloquence contained in it as evidence of the divine provenance of the Quran. As a result, it is not only a very hard task to translate the

Quranic text into English but to achieve a perfect, comparable translation is a myth. The true meanings of the Quran are argued to be beyond human perception (*cf.* Quran, 31: 27). It is even appropriate that one confesses inability to express any virtue of the Quran; his/her word may fall far behind what the Quran really deserves.

Since there can never be a one-to-one relationship between a SL text and a translation (House, 2009: 29), translators of the Quran should do their best to convey a similar message and fulfill a similar function in order to preserve as many features of the original as possible. This can be done by comprehending the SL text within its context and consulting some well-known exegetes in order to be acquainted with which interpretation is overweighed. Actually, the meaning of a religious text cannot be easily determined since its textual material is marked with many ambiguities due to the nature of religious texts which belong to a relatively remote period of time (Ilyas, 1989: 89). All translations of this type of texts are religiously unbinding (Aziz, 2000: 111). In this spirit, Arberry (1982) states:

*"[I]n making the present attempt to [...] to produce something which might be accepted as echoing however faintly the sublime rhetoric of the Arabic Koran, I have been at pains to study the intricate and richly varied rhythms which—apart from the message itself—constitute the Koran's undeniable claim to rank amongst the greatest literary masterpieces of mankind [...]. For the Koran is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both" (p. 10).*

This criticism is mostly attributed to the too many comments and insertions in parentheses within this English version of the Quran. The use of such interpolations—i.e. the textual additions put in round or square brackets within the translated text (i.e. the TAIps)—is primarily perilous. In actual fact, any of such controversial TAIps in a possible translation of such a commonly claimed-to-be word of God as the Quran could be quite like a *mine* to blow up at any time or place or under any circumstance as the a TL reader's eye comes upon it. Anyhow, much of this criticism is particularly related to the parenthetically inserted parts of the HKT involving any single reference to the other religions or non-Muslim nations. Seemingly refusing the HKT *at all*, several scholars have argued that such additions are much beyond literality; they go against the original message(s) intended in the Quranic text in whole or in part. Despite such criticisms and disastrous comments, various implicit lexical/structural positions are made explicit by means of *the* TAIps.

To end with, rendering the Quranic text into a completely different language and/or culture such as English is highly demanding. Owing to the concise original language and various linguistic aspects of the Quran, a perfect translation should help the SL text make sense, be of a similar response to a TL reader and have a natural form of expression (Hawamdeh, 2017). Having a charming Arabic dress encompassing a concise and exalted style, the Quran is distinguished for its emphatic style and its translators are reputed for being unable to match it in

the TL(s) (Ghazalah, 2008: 15). For the HKT in particular, such a self-contained instance of language use as a translated text of the Quran is intended to be efficiently explicitated, effectively textualized and appropriately communicated by its many TAIps (cf. Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981); however, many of them should be kept out of the translated text as they are neither norm-governed nor performed in strategic manners.

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