

Strategies of Translating Toponyms in the Glorious Qur'an¹

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Abstract:

This study deals with the strategies of translating toponyms, or place names, in five well-known translations of the Qur'an. Each culture has its own specific place names or place features which distinguish it from other cultures. Since toponyms are culture-specific, they constitute a main problem for the translators of the Qur'an. The present study seeks to answer the following questions: Are there any problems faced by the translators of the Qur'an in transferring toponyms? What are they? What are the types of strategies used by the different

translators to deal with these problems? Are these strategies conservation or substitution strategies? Foreignizing or domesticating? To find the answers to the previous questions, the study adopts Aixelá's model (1996) for describing these strategies. The study concludes that there are seven strategies used to render toponyms in the Qur'an. The extratextual gloss has proved to be the most commonly used strategy followed by the linguistic strategy/ orthographic adaptation, naturalization, intratextual gloss and finally absolute/ limited universalization. Strategies used by

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the five translators are mostly foreignizing.

Keywords:

Culture-specific aspects ,Toponyms ,Aixelá's model

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة استراتيجيات ترجمة أسماء المواقع الجغرافية أو أسماء الأماكن في خمس ترجمات معروفة لمعاني للقرآن الكريم. فلكل ثقافة أسماء أماكن خاصة بها أو ملامح المكان التي تميزها عن الثقافات الأخرى. وحيث إن أسماء الأماكن ذات خصوصية ثقافية، فإنها تعتبر مشكلة رئيسية تواجه مترجمي معاني القرآن الكريم. وتسعى هذه الدراسة إلى الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية: هل هناك أي مشاكل تواجه مترجمي معاني القرآن الكريم في نقل الأسماء الجغرافية؟ وما هي هذه المشاكل؟ ما هي أنواع الاستراتيجيات التي استخدمها المترجمون للتعامل مع هذه المشاكل؟ هل هذه الاستراتيجيات استراتيجيات إبقاء أم استبدال؟ تغريبية أم تقريبية؟ وللإجابة على الأسئلة السابقة تتبنى الدراسة نموذج أكسيلا (Aixelá) (1996) لوصف هذه الاستراتيجيات.

وتوصلت الدراسة إلى هناك سبعة استراتيجيات استخدمها المترجمون لترجمة الأسماء الجغرافية في القرآن الكريم وهي حسب شيوع الاستخدام: الحواشي المميزة عن النص، تلوها الترجمة اللغوية/ والتحوير الهجائي، والاستبدال الثقافي، ثم الحواشي المدججة في النص وأخيرًا التعميم المطلق/ والمحدود. والاستراتيجيات المستخدمة من قبل المترجمين معظمها استراتيجيات تغريبية.

الكلمات الدالة:

الجوانب ذات الخصوصية الثقافية، الأسماء الجغرافية، نموذج أكسيلا

Introduction:

Toponyms in the Glorious Qur'an represent a special problem that is culture-specific. Culture-specific aspects are elements that distinguish every culture and may be present or not in other cultures. Ioana Irina Durdureanu (2011) believes that each culture has its own terms which distinguish it from other cultures. Such terms are a main

problem encountered by the translator who attempts to transfer them to the target language (p.54). There are many types of these culture-specific terms. For example, M. Harvey mentions only “concepts, institutions and personnel” (qtd by Durdureanu, 2011, p.57). On the other hand, Mona Baker (1992) gives a broader definition of culture-specific aspects:

The source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as ‘culture-specific’. (p. 28)

Aixelá (1996) gives perhaps the most practical definition of culture-specific aspects. His definition runs as follows:

Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text. (p. 58)

Aixelá’s definition is a practical one as it shows that culture-specific aspects are real items encountered by the translator in transferring the source text to another language. Aixelá also argues that since their function or connotations may be different, they represent a real problem for the translator. An item is deemed a culture-specific item if it plays a different role, or does not exist at all in the target language culture.

The present research aims at

studying the translation of toponyms in five translations of the Qur'an. Arranged chronologically, these translations are as follows: (1) *The Koran Translated from the Arabic* by John Meadows Rodwell (1861), (2) *The Message of the Qur'an* by Muhammad Asad (1980), (3) *THE QURAN: The First Poetic Translation* by Fazlollah Nikayin (2000), (4) *The Qur'an: A New Translation* by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (2005) and (5) *Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* by Ahmad Hamid and Mohamed Hamed (2011). To achieve this aim, examples from the previous translations are analyzed to explain how toponyms are translated.

The previous translations were intentionally chosen to represent different times and backgrounds. First, these translations were produced over three different

periods. As the publication dates show, Rodwell's translation came out in the 19th century; Asad's, in the 20th century; and Nikayin's, Abdel Haleem's and Hamed and Hamid's, in the 21st century. Second, the religion of the translators is also different: Rodwell is a Christian and Asad was a Jew who converted to Islam whereas the rest of the translators are Muslims. Third, the linguistic background is also different: Rodwell is an English native speaker who learnt Arabic; Asad is an Austrian who learnt both Arabic and English; Nikayin is an Iranian who learnt both Arabic and English; Abdel Haleem and Hamid and Hamed are Arabic native speakers who learnt English. Finally, all the translations are prose translations except Nikayin's (which is verse throughout) and Hamid and

Hamed's (which is partly verse). The present study will highlight whether the factors of time, religion, language and style of translation have an impact on rendering toponyms. ⁽²⁾

Javier Franco Aixelá's (1996) article "Culture-Specific Items in Translation" deals with the different strategies used for translating the culture-specific aspects of which toponyms is a significant type. According to Aixelá, these strategies are divided into two major types: conservation and substitution. By conservation, Aixelá means those strategies which are used to preserve cultural differences, that is to say, they are foreignizing strategies. In contrast, substitution strategies refer to strategies used to adapt cultural differences; they are domesticating strategies. The Conservation Strategies are:

1. **Repetition (R)**: Both source language (SL) and target language (TL) use the same word on condition that both languages have the same alphabet. This strategy is used in translating most toponyms or place names (Aixelá, 1996, p.61).
2. **Orthographic adaptation (OA)** is using "*procedures like transcription and transliteration, which are mainly used when the original reference is expressed in a different alphabet from the one target readers use*" (ibid, 1996, p.61).
3. **Linguistic (non-cultural) translation (LT)** is giving the meaning of the culture-specific item in another language by using "*a denotatively very close reference to the original*" (ibid, pp. 61-62).

4. **Extratextual gloss (EG):** This strategy is an auxiliary strategy used with the main strategy to give more information in “*a footnote, endnote, glossary, commentary /translation in brackets, in italics, etc.*” (ibid, p.62).
 5. **Intratextual gloss (IG)** is a “*gloss [added] as an indistinct part of the text, usually so as not to disturb the reader’s attention*” (ibid, p.62).
- Substitution Strategies** include:
1. **Synonymy (S):** As its name suggests, this strategy depends on using a synonym or a word similar in meaning instead of using the same Culture-Specific Item (CSI) again (ibid, p.63).
 2. **Limited Universalization (LU):** An unknown CSI is replaced by an item more commonly used in the **source** language (ibid, p.63).
 3. **Absolute Universalization (AU):** A **neutral** reference is used instead of an unknown CSI (ibid, p.63).
 4. **Naturalization (N):** using a CSI from the culture of the **target** language to take the place of its **source** language counterpart (ibid, p.63). For example, using the word ‘pound’ instead of ‘dollar’ when translating from English into Arabic.
 5. **Deletion (Del):** means that the CSI is deleted or not translated at all (ibid, p.64).
 6. **Autonomous Creation (AC):** adding a culture-specific item to the target text which is not found in the original so that it becomes more interesting (ibid, p.64).
 7. **Compensation (C)** is a combination of “*deletion [and] autonomous creation at another*

point of the text with a similar effect” (ibid, p.64).

8. **Dislocation (Dis):** is a “displacement in the text of the same reference” (ibid, p.64). That is to say, the culture-specific item is moved to another place in the target text.

9. **Attenuation (A):** is the “replacement, on ideological grounds, of something ‘too strong’ or in any way unacceptable, by something ‘softer’, more adequate to target pole written tradition or to what could, in theory, be expected by readers” (ibid, p.64).

According to Matielo and Espindola (n. d.), a toponym is “a place name, a geographical name, a proper name of locality, region, or some other part of the Earth’s surface or its natural or artificial feature” (p.78). There are various

names of places in the Glorious Qur’an as shown in these examples:

Example 1:

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنَاً وَاتَّخِذُوا
مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى... (البقرة: ١٢٥)

This verse deals with the story of Prophet Ibrahim and his building of the Kaaba. Here, the verse refers to the place where Ibrahim used to stand to build the Kaaba as his son Ismail handed him the stones. Muslims are commanded to take it as a place of prayer. The Pilgrimage rites are deeply rooted in the Arabic culture even before the advent of Prophet Mohammed (Pbuh). Commentators have mentioned different opinions regarding this place. Ibn Katheer (1999) mentions two views on the authority of Ibn Abbas and Said ibn Jubair respectively. The first view mentions that (مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ)

refers to the whole area of the Mosque, whereas the second view refers to the stone where Ibrahim (Pbuh) used to stand to build the Kaaba (Part I, pp.413- 414). Ibn Manzour (2010) mentions that the word (مَقَام) refers to “مَوْضِعُ” (الْقَدَمَيْنِ), that is, it is the place where feet tread (Part XII, p.498). How do the translators of the Qur’an deal with this culture-bound item?

Rodwell:

And remember when we appointed the Holy House as man’s resort and safe retreat, and said, “Take ye the station of Abraham for a place of prayer” (2:125)

Asad:

AND LO! We made the Temple a goal to which people might repair again and again, and a sanctuary: “take then, the place whereon Abraham once stood as your place

of prayer.”

Nikayin:

And do remember that We made this House,
A place of gathering for humankind,
And a safe sanctuary; do take a place,
Of prayer, where Abraham was wont to stand

Abdel Haleem:

We made the House a resort and a sanctuary for people, saying, ‘Take the spot where Abraham stood as your place of prayer.’

Hamid and Hamed:

And when We decreed the House to be a meeting place for the people and a sanctuary, and said: “Take you Ibrahim’s (Abraham’s) podium as a prayer place”

The five translators have used different strategies to render these culture-specific elements. **Rodwell** uses linguistic translation and an

extratextual gloss to explain the meaning of the word 'the Holy House' which means, as he mentions in his endnote, "*The Caaba*" (p.433). He has rendered the word (مَقَامَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ) linguistically since 'station' means "*a place where somebody has to wait and watch or be ready to do work if needed*" (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 2010, no. 6, p.1511). The word indicates the purpose for Ibrahim's standing as to carry out the building of the Kaaba.

Asad translates the word (الْبَيْتَ) as 'the Temple' using naturalization to avoid literal translation. However, his translation is wrong because the word 'temple' means "*a building used for the worship of a god or gods, especially in religions other than Christianity*" (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*,

2010, no 1, p.1594). However, in his extratextual gloss (i.e. footnote) he explains its meaning as follows "*The Temple (al-bayt) - lit., 'the House [of Worship] - mentioned here is the Ka'bah in Mecca*" (p.49). His footnotes on this verse exceed five hundred words explaining the history of the Sacred House, its construction and position in Islam. Of all the five translators, Asad's footnotes are the longest and most scholarly. He has rendered the word (مَقَامَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ) linguistically into "the place whereon Abraham once stood". He adds an extratextual gloss (a footnote) on this phrase: "*This may refer to the immediate vicinity of the Ka'bah or, more probably ... to the sacred precincts (haram) surrounding it*" (p.50).

Nikayin uses linguistic translation rendering the two words as "this House" and "where Abraham was

wont to stand”. He uses the extratextual gloss “*The Ka’ba at Mecca*” (p.27) to explain the meaning. **Abdel Haleem** uses linguistic translation and an extratextual gloss (i.e. footnote) to explain the meaning of the word ‘House’ which means “*The Ka’ba at Mecca*” (p.15) and to remove any cultural barriers that might be created by this cultural reference. He has also used linguistic translation in “the spot where Abraham stood”. By describing the culture-specific elements in question he preserves their cultural specificity. However, they will be easily understood by the TT readers.

It is clear from **Hamed and Hamid**’s translation that they adopt several strategies. They use linguistic translation for the first word translating it into ‘the House’. They depend mainly on

naturalization as in the words (مَقَامٍ (إِبْرَاهِيمَ) for which they use ‘podium’. The word ‘podium’ is unsuitable because it has different connotations for it means “*a small platform that a person stands on when giving a speech or CONDUCTING an ORCHESTRA*” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, 2010, no.1, p.1167).

Example 2:

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ عَنْ قِبَلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (البقرة: ١٤٢)

This verse deals with the change of the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to the Kaaba. The change was meant to test people’s faith as to who would follow the Messenger and who would not. Reda (1990) explains that the Prophets of Children of Israel used to pray facing the direction of

Jerusalem. Prophet Muhammad also used to pray facing the direction of Jerusalem at first while facing the Kaaba in Makkah but this was impossible when he migrated to Madina. He was eager to face the Kaaba again:

كَانَ أَنْبِيَاءُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ يُصَلُّونَ إِلَى بَيْتِ
الْمُقَدَّسِ، وَكَانَتْ صَخْرَةُ الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى
الْمَعْرُوفَةُ هِيَ قِبْلَتَهُمْ، وَقَدْ صَلَّى النَّبِيُّ
وَالْمُسْلِمُونَ إِلَيْهَا زَمْنَا، وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَتَشَوَّفُ لِاسْتِقْبَالِ الْكَعْبَةِ،
وَيَتَمَنَّى لَوْ حَوَّلَ اللَّهُ الْقِبْلَةَ إِلَيْهَا؛ بَلْ كَانَ
يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَ اسْتِقْبَالِهَا وَاسْتِقْبَالِ الصَّخْرَةِ فِي مَكَّةَ
فَيُصَلِّي فِي جِهَةِ الْجَنُوبِ مُسْتَقْبِلًا لِلشَّمَالِ، فَلَمَّا
هَاجَرَ مِنْهَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ تَعَدَّرَ هَذَا الْجَمْعُ، فَتَوَجَّهَ
إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِجَعْلِ الْكَعْبَةِ هِيَ الْقِبْلَةَ، فَأَمَرَهُ
اللَّهُ بِذَلِكَ. (رضا، ١٩٩٠ جزء ٢، ص ٣)

Rodwell:

The foolish ones will say, “What hath turned them from the kebla which they used?” SAY: The East and the West are God’s. He guideth whom he will into the right path. (2:142)

Asad:

THE WEAK-MINDED among people will say, “What has turned them away from the direction of prayer which they have hitherto observed?” Say: “God’s is the east and the west; He guides whom He wills onto a straight way.”

Nikayin:

The fools among the people are to say:

“What really made them turn away From the direction of their *qiblah*? ”

Tell them: Both East and West belong to Allah;

He guides whome’er He will to the Right Way.

Abdel Haleem:

The foolish people will say, ‘What has turned them away from the prayer direction they used to face?’ Say, ‘East and West belong to God. He guides whoever He will to the right way.’

Hamid and Hamed:

The imbeciles among the people will say: “What made them change their direction of prayers which they had before?” Say: “To God belongs the East and the West. He guides whomsoever He wills to the straight path”.

This example shows that the five translators have followed different strategies to render this culture-specific concept. **Rodwell** has resorted to orthographic adaptation (i.e. transliteration) which gives his translation a foreignizing effect. He has rendered the word (قِبْلَة) into ‘kebla’. **Asad** resorts to linguistic translation paraphrasing the word into ‘the direction of prayer’. He also resorts to an extratextual gloss (a very long footnote) to explain the meaning of change of the direction of prayers from Jerusalem to the Kaaba.

Nikayin uses orthographic adaptation and an extratextual gloss rendering the word into ‘qiblah’ which he explains in the footnote: “*Qiblah: The direction to which Muslims turn in prayer*” (p.31). **Abdel Haleem** uses linguistic translation since he renders the word into ‘the prayer direction’. He uses extratextual gloss (footnotes) for this concept. His footnote reads “*This refers to the change in the Muslims’ prayer direction from Jerusalem to Mecca in the second year of the Hijra*” (p.16). **Hamid and Hamed** also use linguistic translation for the word is rendered into ‘direction of prayer’.

Example 3:

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ...
(البقرة ١٥٨)

Rodwell:

Verily, Safa and Marwah are among the monuments of God (2: 158)

Asad:

[Hence,] behold, As-Safa and Al-Marwah are among the symbols set up by God

Nikayin:

Some symbols are *Safa* and *Marwah*,

Only consecrated by Allah,

Abdel Haleem:

Safa and Marwa are among the rites of God

Hamid and Hamed:

The Mounts of Safa and Marwa are indeed of the rites of God's religion.

The five translators have adopted various strategies to render these culture-specific places. All the translators have resorted to orthographic adaptation which gives their translation a foreignizing effect. However, they have used an auxiliary strategy of extratextual gloss by which they try to alleviate the foreignizing

effect of their translation.

Rodwell's extratextual gloss or endnote gives some seemingly important but biased historical information. It reads:

Hills in the sacred territory of Mecca, which had long been objects of superstitious reverence to the idolatrous Arabs, on which account the Muslims were at first unwilling to include them among the sacred places. (p.434)

Asad adds the following extratextual gloss:

The space between the two low outcrops of rock called As-Safa and Al-Marwah, situated in Mecca in the immediate vicinity of the Ka'bah, is said to have been the scene of Hagar's suffering when Abraham, following God's command, abandoned her and their infant son Ishmael in the desert (see note 102 above). Distraught with thirst and fearing

for the life of her child, Hagar ran to and fro between the two rocks and fervently prayed to God for succour: and, finally, her reliance on God and her patience were rewarded by the discovery of a spring-existing to this day and known as the Well of Zamzam - which saved the two from death through thirst. It was in remembrance of Hagar's extreme trial, and of her trust in God, that As-Safa and Al-Marwah had come to be regarded, even in pre-Islamic times, as symbols of faith and patience in adversity: and this explains their mention in the context of the passages which deal with the virtues of patience and trust in God (Razi). (pp.58-59)

Nikayin only mentions that these are "Names of two hills near Mecca" (p.34). **Abdel Haleem's** gloss (footnote) is more concise and accurate: "Two hills adjacent

to the Ka'ba between which a pilgrim and visitor should walk up and down in commemoration of what Hagar did in search of water for her baby, Ishmael" (p.18). It is noticeable that **Hamid and Hamed** were the only translators who used three strategies to render (الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ): intratextual gloss (i.e. the mounts), orthographic adaptation and extratextual gloss (very long footnotes).

Example 4:

ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
(البقرة: ١٩٦)...

Rodwell:

This is binding on him whose family shall not be present at the sacred Mosque. (2: 196)

Asad:

All this relates to him who does not live near the Inviolable House of Worship.

Nikayin:

This is for those whose homes are

not within,

The precincts of the Holy Mosque...

Abdel Haleem:

This applies to those whose household is not near the Sacred Mosque.

Hamid and Hamed:

for him who is not dwelling in the area of the Holy Mosque.

Rodwell, Nikayin, Abdel Haleem and Hamid and Hamed use the linguistic strategy to translate this word into 'the sacred Mosque', 'Holy Mosque', 'the Sacred Mosque' and 'the Holy Mosque' respectively. **Asad** uses absolute universalization to translate it into 'the Inviolable House of Worship'. He also uses an extratextual gloss (footnote):

Lit., "whose people are not present at the Inviolable House of Worship"- i.e., do not permanently reside there: for, obviously, the

inhabitants of Mecca cannot remain permanently in the state of ihram. (p.74)

Example 5:

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الضَّالِّينَ (البقرة: ١٩٨)

Rodwell:

It shall be no crime in you if ye seek an increase from your Lord; and when ye pour swiftly on from Arafat, then remember God near the holy monument; and remember Him, because He hath guided you who before this were of those who went astray (2: 198)

Asad:

[However,] you will be committing no sin if [during the pilgrimage] you seek to obtain any bounty from your Sustainer. And when you surge downward in multitudes from 'Arafat, remember God at the holy place, and

remember Him as the One who guided you after you had indeed been lost on your way

Nikayin:

There shall upon you be no fault,
In seeking bounties from your Lord;

And after you file down from *Arafaat*,

As you approach the Holy Edifice,
Celebrate Allah's praises, and remember

Him that provided you with guidance,

Whereas before this you were all in error.

Abdel Haleem:

but it is no offence to seek some bounty from your Lord. When you surge down from Arafat remember God at the sacred place. Remember Him: He has guided you. Before that you were astray.

Hamid and Hamed:

No blame will befall you if you

seek God's Bounty in earthly gains. So when you have proceeded from Arafat, then invoke God at the Sacred Stop, and plead with Him as He guided you, for before that you were of the astrays.

The five translators have followed the same strategy to render the first culture-specific word. They have used orthographic adaptation as a safe strategy to render the word (عَرَفَات) which gives their translation a foreignizing effect. As for the word (الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ), it is rendered as 'holy monument', 'holy place', 'the Holy Edifice', 'sacred place' and 'sacred stop' respectively. The strategy preferred by Rodwell and Nikayin is naturalization. The word 'monument' used by Rodwell is inaccurate for it means "a building, column, statue, etc. built to remind people of a famous

person or event” (Oxford *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, 2010 no.1, p.993). The word ‘edifice’ (which is used by **Nikayin**) is also inaccurate for it means “a large impressive building” (ibid, no.1, p.484). **Asad** gives the following extratextual gloss (footnote) on this item:

The gathering of all pilgrims on the plain of 'Arafat, east of Mecca, takes place on the 9th of Dhu'l-Hijjah and constitutes the climax of the pilgrimage. The pilgrims are required to remain until sunset on that plain, below the hillock known as Jabal ar-Rahmah (“the Mount of Grace”) - a symbolic act meant to bring to mind that ultimate gathering on Resurrection Day, when every soul will await God’s judgment. (p.75)

This conforms with reliable exegeses for Hegazi (2003) argues

that (المُشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ) is a mountain in Muzdalifa on which the Imam stands to deliver the sermon:

جبل بالمزدلفة يقف عليه: المُشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ
الإمام يسمي فُرْحًا، وسمى مشعراً لأنه
معلم للعبادة ووصف بالحرام لحرمة.
(حجازي، ٢٠٠٣، جزء ١، ص ١٢١)

Al-Tabary (2000) mentions on the authority of Ibn Omar that (المُشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ) means the Mountain of Muzdalifa and the area around it (Part IV, p.176). Nikayin tries to explain its meaning in his extratextual gloss: “*Mash’ar al-Haraam located at Muzdalifah, between Arafat and Mina where the Holy Prophet offered up a long prayer*” (p.45).

Two translators use linguistic translation and an extratextual gloss (footnote) to explain the meaning of (المُشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ) as “*Immediately after sunset, the multitudes of pilgrims move back in the direction of Mecca, stopping*

overnight at a place called Muzdalifah, the 'holy place' referred to" (p.75) (Asad), and "one of the sites of the pilgrimage between Arafat and Mina— a plain called Muzdalifa" (p.22) (Abdel Haleem). Hamid and Hamed also use only linguistic translation.

Example 6:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا
وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (٩٦) فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ ... (٩٧) آل عمران

Rodwell:

The first temple that was founded for mankind, was that in Becca,— Blessed, and a guidance to human beings. In it are evident signs, even the standing-place of Abraham (3: 96-97)

Asad:

Behold, the first Temple ever set up for mankind was indeed the one at Bakkah: rich in blessing, and a [source of] guidance unto all the worlds, full of clear messages.

[It is] the place whereon Abraham once stood

Nikayin:

Most certainly the very first of shrines,

For worship, ever built for humankind,

Is that at Becca, blessedly ordained,

As a beacon to guide all nations;

In it are lucid signs;

Even Abraham's Station

Abdel Haleem:

The first House [of worship] to be established for people was the one at Mecca. It is a blessed place; a source of guidance for all people; there are clear signs in it; it is the place where Abraham stood to pray

Hamed and Hamid:

Indeed the first House of worship, erected for people is that in Bakka (Mecca) blessed and guiding to the Universe. In it are evident signs:

Ibrahim's (Abraham's) podium.

Rodwell uses orthographic adaptation and an extratextual gloss (endnote) to translate the first word. His endnote reads "*Becca, place of crowding, i.e. Mecca*" (p.476). He also uses linguistic translation to translate the second word into 'standing-place of Abraham' and an extratextual gloss (endnote). His endnote uses transliteration and detailed description:

The Makam Ibrahim (praying place of Abraham) is a small building supported by six pillars about 8 ft. high, four of which are surrounded from top to bottom by a fine iron railing, while they leave the space between the two hind pillars open; within the railing is a frame about 5 ft. square, said to contain the sacred stone on which Ibrahim stood when he built the Caaba. (p.476)

Rodwell's translation is consistent since he translates the word (مَقَامٌ) here as 'standing-place of Abraham' and earlier 'station of Abraham'. Here he again uses linguistic translation (see 2:125).

Asad also uses orthographic adaptation and extratextual gloss (footnote) to translate the first word (بَكَّةَ). For the second word, Asad uses linguistic translation. His footnote on the first word reads:

All authorities agree that this name is synonymous with Mecca (which, correctly transliterated, is spelt Makkah). Various etymologies have been suggested for this very ancient designation; but the most plausible explanation is given by Zamakhshari (and supported by Razi): in some old Arabic dialects the labial consonants b and m, being phonetically close to one another, are occasionally

interchangeable. (p.130)

Nikayin uses orthographic adaptation and extratextual gloss to translate the first word. His gloss is concise but illuminating: “Ancient name of Mecca meaning ‘a place of gathering’ ” (p.91). He uses linguistic translation to translate the second word into ‘Abraham’s Station’. His gloss on the second item is also concise “The spot where Abraham stood for prayer” (p.91). **Abdel Haleem** uses limited universalization as the English reader is more familiar with the word ‘Mecca’ than ‘Bakka’. However, his extratextual gloss (footnote) explains the culture-specific name as follows “the original reads *Bakka*, which was an old name for Mecca” (p.41). Tantawy (2010) explains that Bakka refers to Makka or the first refers to the mosque site whereas the latter refers to the

whole city:

وبكة: لغة في مكة عند الأكثرين، والباء والميم تعقب إحداهما الأخرى كثيراً، ومنه النميط والنبيط فهما اسم لموضع . وقيل هما متغايران: فبكة موضع المسجد ومكة اسم البلد بأسرها . وأصل كلمة بكة من البك وهو الأزدحام . يقال تباك القوم إذا تراحموا، وكأنها سميت بذلك لازدحام الحجيج فيها. والبك أيضاً دق العنق، وكأنها سميت بكة لأن الجابرة تندق أعناقهم إذا أرادوها بسوء. وقيل إنها مأخوذة من بكأت الناقة أو الشاة إذا قل لبنها، وكأنها إنما سميت بذلك لقله مائها وخصبها. (طنطاوي، ٢٠١٠، جزء ١، ص ٦٧٨)

Hamid and Hamed use the same strategy but instead of footnotes they use brackets.

Asad, Abdel Haleem and Hamid and Hamed have been consistent in rendering (مَقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ) translated earlier ‘the place where Abraham once stood’, ‘the spot where Abraham stood’, ‘Abraham’s (Ibrahim’s) podium’. Here it is translated as ‘the place whereon

Abraham once stood', 'the place where Abraham stood to pray', 'Abraham's (Ibrahim's) podium' respectively. Asad and Abdel Haleem have used linguistic translation to render this phrase, whereas Hamid and Hamed use naturalization.

Example 7:

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ
أَعْتَبْتَكُمْ كَثَرْتُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا
وَصَافَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحَبَتْ ثُمَّ وََلَيْتُمْ
مُذَبِّرِينَ (٢٥) التوبة

Rodwell:

Now hath God helped you in many battlefields, and, on the day of Honein, when ye prided yourselves on your numbers; but it availed you nothing; and the earth, with all its breadth, became too straight for you: then turned ye your backs in flight. (9:25)

Asad:

Indeed, God has succoured you on many battlefields, [when you were

few;] and [He did so, too,] on the Day of Hunayn, when you took pride in your great numbers and they proved of no avail whatever to you - for the earth, despite all its vastness, became [too] narrow for you and you turned back, retreating.

Nikayin:

You have been helped by God on many a field,
As well as in the Battle of Hounain,

When your tremendous numbers made you vain,
But this availed you nothing, and the land,
For all its breadth, about you straitened,
And, tails between your legs, you fled!

Abdel Haleem:

God has helped you [believers] on many battlefields, even on the day of the Battle of Hunayn. You were

well pleased with your large numbers, but they were of no use to you: the earth seemed to close in on you despite its spaciousness, and you turned tail and fled.

Hamed and Hamid:

“Indeed, God has made you victorious on many fronts and on the Day of Hunein when you rejoiced in your numerical superiority, which availed you naught, and the earth around you appeared tightened despite its vastness, and you took to your heels.

Four translators use orthographic adaptation and extratextual gloss to explain this culture specific place. Their extratextual gloss indicates that it is “a valley three miles from Mecca” (Rodwell, p.568); “a valley situated on one of the roads leading from Mecca to Ta’if”; (Asad, p.376) “A valley between Mecca and Taa’if”

(Nikayin, p. 287); “a valley between Mecca and Ta’if” (Abdel Haleem, p.118). Hamid and Hamed use only orthographic adaptation.

Example 8:

وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ وَيَا سَمَاءُ أَفْلِعِي
وَوَغِيضَ الْمَاءِ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلَى
الْجُودِيِّ وَقِيلَ بُعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (٤٤) هود

Rodwell:

And it was said, “O Earth! swallow up thy water;” and “cease, O Heaven!” And the water abated, and the decree was fulfilled, and the Ark rested upon Al-Djoudi; and it was said, “Avaunt! ye tribe of the wicked!” (11:44)

Asad:

And the word was spoken: “O earth, swallow up thy waters! And, O sky, cease [thy rain]!” And the waters sank into the earth, and the will [of God] was done, and the ark came to rest on Mount Judi.

And the word was spoken: "Away with these evildoing folk!"

Nikayin:

And then the Word went forth:

"Swallow your water, O you Earth!

And cease your rains, O heavens!"

The water thus receded,

The matter was decided,

And *she* came down to rest,

Upon Mount Joudi's breast,

And the announcement rang:

"Gone are the people who did wrong!"

Abdel Haleem:

Then it was said, 'Earth, swallow up your water, and sky, hold back,' and the water subsided, the command was fulfilled. The Ark settled on Mount Judi, and it was said, 'Gone are those evildoing people!'

Hamed and Hamid:

And it was said: "O Earth! Swallow your waters, and O skies!

Refrain from raining," and the water receded, and God's Ordainment was fulfilled, and it settled on the Jude, and it was said: "Damned be the inequitable folk!"

Rodwell has used orthographic adaptation to translate this item into 'Al-Djoudi'. He uses extratextual gloss (endnote) on this word to identify the place: "*The Montes Gordyoei, perhaps*" (p.271). **Asad** uses three strategies: orthographic adaptation, intratextual gloss and extratextual gloss to translate this word into 'Mount Judi'. He also tries to identify the place in his footnote:

This mountain, known in ancient Syriac as Qardu, is situated in the region of Lake Van, almost twenty-five miles north-east of the town Jazirat Ibn 'Umar, capital of the modern Syrian district of Al-Jazirah. (pp.460-461)

Nikayin also uses three strategies: orthographic adaptation, intratextual gloss and extratextual gloss to translate this word into ‘Mount Joudi’. He also tries to identify the place in his concise footnote: “*One of the mountains which divide Armenia on the south from Mesopotamia*” (p.341). **Abdel Haleem** uses two strategies: orthographic adaptation and intratextual gloss whereas **Hamid and Hamed** use only orthographic adaptation.

Example 9:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ
لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ
(الإسراء: ١)

Rodwell:

GLORY be to Him who carried his servant by night from the sacred temple of Mecca to the temple that is more remote, whose precinct we have blessed, that we

might shew him of our signs! for He is the Hearer, the Seer. (17:1)

Asad:

LIMITLESS in His glory is He who transported His servant by night from the Inviolable House of Worship [at Mecca] to the Remote House of Worship [at Jerusalem] - the environs of which We had blessed - so that We might show him some of Our symbols: for, verily, He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing.

Nikayin:

Glory to Him who made His servant,

Go from the sacred shrine, by night,

To the Temple more distant,

Whose precincts We have blessed;

That we to him make manifest,

Some of Our signs; He is alone,

The Hearing, Seeing One.

Abdel Haleem:

Glory to Him who made His

servant travel by night from the sacred place of worship to the furthest place of worship, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him some of Our signs: He alone is the All Hearing, the All Seeing.

Hamed and Hamid:

Glorified is He who made His servant journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, the precincts of which We have blessed, to show him of Our Signs. Indeed He is the All-Hearing, All-Perceptive.

Rodwell has used the naturalization and linguistic translation to translate this item into 'the temple that is more remote'. He uses extratextual gloss (endnote) on this phrase:

Of Jerusalem; and thence through the seven heavens to the throne of God on the back of Borak, accompanied by Gabriel,

according to some traditions; while others, and those too of early date, regard it as no more than a vision. It was, however, in all probability a dream. (p.211)

Asad translates this phrase into 'Remote House of Worship [at Jerusalem]' using two strategies: absolute universalization and extratextual gloss (brackets, footnote and an appendix). His footnote is more detailed than Rodwell's:

The above short reference to the Prophet's mystic experience of the "Night Journey" (al-isra') to Jerusalem and the subsequent "Ascension" (mi'raj) to heaven is fully discussed in Appendix IV at the end of this work. "The Inviolable House of Worship" (al-masjid al-haram is one of the designations given in the Qur'an to the Temple of the Ka'bah, the prototype of which owed its origin

to Abraham (see surah 2, note 102) and was “the first Temple set up for mankind” (3:96), i.e., the first ever built for the worship of the One God. “The Remote [lit., “farthest”] House of Worship”, on the other hand, denotes the ancient Temple of Solomon - or, rather, its site - which symbolizes here the long line of Hebrew prophets who preceded the advent of Muhammad and are alluded to by the phrase “the environs of which We had blessed”. The juxtaposition of these two sacred temples is meant to show that the Qur’an does not inaugurate a “new” religion but represents a continuation and the ultimate development of the same divine message which was preached by the prophets of old. (p.594)

Like Rodwell, **Nikayin** uses naturalization and linguistic translation rendering the word into

‘the Temple more distant’. His gloss explains that it is ‘Jerusalem’ (p.434). **Abel Haleem** has used the linguistic translation for this phrase rendered ‘the furthest place of worship’. His extratextual gloss (footnote) on this phrase is very concise indicating the name of the place referred to here as ‘in Jerusalem’ (p.175). **Hamid and Hamed** have also used linguistic translation to translate this word which is rendered ‘the Farthest Mosque’. Their translation is more precise but the meaning may be unclear to the foreign reader who does not understand the cultural reference. To overcome this problem, they use an extratextual gloss to explain the meaning by pointing out that this mosque is ‘in Jerusalem’ (in the introduction to this sura) (p. 344).

Example 10:

وَأَذْكُرُ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَّتِ التُّنُذُورُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمَنْ خَلْفَهُ إِلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ (٢١) الأحقاف

Rodwell:

Remember, too, the brother of Ad when he warned his people in AL AHKAF—and before and since his time there have been warners—“Worship none but God: verily I fear for you the punishment of the great day”. (46:21)

Asad:

AND REMEMBER that brother of [the tribe of] 'Ad, how - seeing that [other] warnings had already come and gone within his own knowledge as well as in times beyond his ken - he warned his people [who lived] among those sand-dunes: “Worship none but God! Verily, I fear lest suffering befall you on an awesome day!”

Nikayin:

And mention one of Aad's own brethren,

Who warned his people in the Sandy Plains,

-Surely before his time and after,

Did come many a warner-

“Serve none but God: for you, I feel the terror,

Of a Day full of dreadful pains!”

Abdel Haleem:

Mention [Hud] of the tribe of 'Ad: he warned his people among the sand dunes— other warners have come and gone both before and after him—‘Worship no one but God: I fear for you, that you will be punished on a terrible Day,’

Hamed and Hamid:

And mention the brother Messenger to Aad when he warned them in the Winding Sands, and numerous Messengers had preceded and followed him saying: “Believe in no one but God, for I fear you will be

exposed to a Day of great torment”

Rodwell has used orthographic adaptation to translate this item into ‘AL AHKAF’. He uses extratextual gloss (endnote) to explain this culture-specific word: “*That is, Sandhills; at Taief, to which Muhammad had retired in consequence of the opposition, etc., of the Meccans*” (p. 374).

Asad uses linguistic translation to translate this item into ‘sand-dunes’. **Nikayin** uses linguistic translation and extratextual gloss (footnote) on this word: “*Sand hills or sandy dunes: characteristic of the country of the Aad, adjoining Yemen and Hadramaut in Southern Arabia*” (p. 854). Both **Abdel Haleem** and **Hamid and Hamed** use the linguistic strategy to render the word into ‘sand dunes’ and ‘Winding Sands’ respectively.

Abdel Haleem adds an extratextual gloss for he says in the introduction “*sand dunes mentioned ... where the people of 'Ad used to live, and where they were destroyed when they rejected the warning of their prophet*” (p.327). It is remarkable that **Nikayin** and **Hamid and Hamed** use capitalization to indicate that this word refers to a place.

Conclusion:

Toponyms are an extremely culture-specific aspect which represents a major obstacle encountered by the translator of the Qur’an. That is why, in rendering toponyms in the Qur’an, the selected translators have opted for different strategies.

It is clear that the linguistic and religious backgrounds are crucial in transferring the meaning of the Qur’an correctly. This is clear in the word (قَبْلَةَ) which was rendered

by **Rodwell** into 'kebla' using only orthographic adaptation (i.e. transliteration). In contrast, Muslim and Arab translators render the meaning accurately into 'direction of prayer' (**Asad/Hamid and Hamed**) and 'the prayer direction' (**Abdel Haleem**). When orthographic adaptation 'qiblah' is used, it is accompanied by a footnote: '*Qiblah: The direction to which Muslims turn in prayer*' (p.31) (**Nikayin**).

As indicated in Table (1), there are seven strategies used to render toponyms in the Qur'an. The extratextual gloss has proved to be the most commonly used strategy followed by the linguistic strategy/orthographic adaptation, naturalization, intratextual gloss and finally absolute/limited universalization (see Table 2). Since the extratextual gloss is an auxiliary strategy used with the

main strategy to give more information, it was the most commonly used strategy by the translators to give the reader some background information about these culture-specific places.

Strategies used by the five translators are mostly **foreignizing**. Arranged in descending order of foreignization, Abdel Haleem comes first (95.2%) followed by Nikayin (91.6%), Rodwell (90.5%) and finally Asad and Hamid and Hamed (87.5%)³.

In rendering toponyms in the Qur'an, it is recommended that more than one strategy should be used. Glosses, especially, extratextual glosses are of greatest importance to bridge the gap between different cultures.

* * *

Notes

- (1) This research is based on my PhD dissertation supervised by Dr. Omayya Ibrahim Abdel Fattah Khalifa, Associate Professor of English Literature and Translation, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University.
- (2) For background information about the two translations by Asad and Rodwell, I have depended on Al-Khatib's two studies (see the References).
- (3) (See Table 3). The percentage of foreignizing strategies can be calculated by dividing their number on the total number of strategies multiplied by hundred.

* * *

Appendix

Table 1: Strategies Used to Render Toponyms in the Glorious Qur'an

Translator	Rodwell	Asad	Nikayin	Abdel Haleem	Hamed & Hamid
Item					
البيت	LT, EG	N, EG	LT,EG	LT, EG	LT
مقام إبراهيم*	LT	LT,EG	LT	LT	N
قبيلة	OA	LT,EG	OA,EG	LT,EG	LT
الصفاء والمروة	OA, EG	OA,EG	OA,EG	OA,EG	OA,IG, EG
المسجد الحرام	LT	AU, EG	LT	LT	LT
عرفات	OA	OA, EG	OA	OA	OA
المشعر الحرام	N	LT, EG	N, EG	LT, EG	LT
بكة	OA, EG	OA, EG	OA, EG	LU, EG	LU, EG
مقام إبراهيم*	LT, EG	LT	LT, EG	LT	N
حين	OA,EG	OA,EG	OA,EG	OA,EG	OA
الجودي	OA,EG	OA, EG, IG	OA,IG, EG	OA,IG	OA
المسجد الأقصى	N, LT, EG	AU, EG	N,LT, EG	LT, EG	LT,EG
الأحقاف	OA,EG	LT	LT, EG	LT, EG	LT

*For repeated examples, only different strategies are counted.

Table 2: Frequency of the Strategies Used in Rendering Toponyms in the Glorious Qur'an

Strategy	Foreignizing Strategies				Total	Domesticating Strategies			Total
	LT	EG	OA	IG		N	AU	LU	
Translator									
Rodwell	4	8	7	0	19	2	0	0	2
Asad	4	11	5	1	21	1	2	0	3
Nikayin	5	10	6	1	22	2	0	0	2
A. Haleem	7	8	4	1	20	0	0	1	1
Hamid & Hamed	6	3	4	1	14	1	0	1	2
Total	26	40	26	4		6	2	2	

Table 3: Percentages of Foreignizing Strategies

Abdel Haleem	95.2 %
Nikayin	91.6%
Rodwell	90.5%
Hamid & Hamed	87.5%
Asad	87.5%

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