

## Lexical Difficulties in Translating Contemporary Spiritual Texts

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### Abstract

Translators of Mystical and corresponding types of spiritual discourse, e.g. Sufi texts, an overlooked area in translation studies--are bound to face several problems, including issues of moral ethical pre-translation one as well as lexical problems in the process of translation. The role of the translator in dealing with such texts goes beyond the inter-lingual equivalences of the messages to a deeper understanding and interpreting of their spiritual function. This paper surveys the first problem by showing that the translator faces an ethical and moral problem before he or she even begins translation. Then, through the analysis of two translations to Arabic of *Tolle's (2005) New Earth: Awakening to Life's Purpose*, the paper identifies the distinctive nature of spiritual language by highlighting the characteristic features of this style and providing some examples. Afterwards, the lexical difficulties that translators may encounter in rendering contemporary Mystical texts are analyzed. Four categories are identified: central concepts having no commonly-used equivalents in contemporary Arabic writings, newly-coined concepts, shared concepts with other fields of knowledge, and concepts borrowed from other religions. Examples are drawn from two available translations, Abu-Hawash's (2009) and Hussain's (2014) translations of Tolle's work into Arabic. The discussion provides an insight into the nature of spiritual texts and how they should be rendered. Translators need to mobilize all resources to help them reach the intended interpretation of each item by going deep into the core of such texts in order to render proper translation

*Key word:* lexical difficulty, mysticism, New Age movement rhetorical devices, spiritual texts, Sufism,