

Communicating Culture

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Abstract

A basic standard in the evaluation of any translation is accuracy and clarity. When a translator comes across a source-text word that does not exist at all in the target language, the tendency is either to substitute it, delete it, or rephrase it. The question is when such a strategy is adopted for communicating meaning that is obliterated from the cultural way of thinking, is culture really communicated? The concept of translation today ceases to be just about meaning and equivalence in the strict sense of producing an English text easily accessible and readable to the English reader. Translation is about communicating culture in the sense of communicating the way of thinking of the source- text culture. It is about creating a medium of readability that is not sacrificial of the source text identity just because that way of thinking does not exist in the target text culture. When the target text fails in communicating this way of thinking in one aspect or another, it fails to be accurate and clear.

Keywords: contrastive conceptual analysis in translation, intercultural communication awareness in translation, translation studies, the translator's (in)visibility, and translation evaluation.

Introduction

A basic standard in the evaluation of any translation is accuracy and clarity. When a translator comes across a source-text word that does not exist at all in the target language, the tendency is either to substitute it, delete it, or re-phrase it. The question is when such a strategy is adopted for communicating meaning that is obliterated from the cultural way of thinking, is culture really communicated? The concept of translation today ceases to be just about meaning and equivalence in the strict sense of producing an English text easily accessible and readable to the English reader. Translation is about communicating culture in the sense of communicating the way of thinking of the source-text culture. It is about creating a medium of readability that is not sacrificial of the source text identity just because that way of thinking does not exist in the target text culture. When the target text fails in communicating this way of thinking in one aspect or another, it fails to be accurate and clear.

Taking into consideration that translation encompasses almost all human activities, one can start from three premises highlighting the practical, linguistic and pragmatic aspects of translation:

- 1- Translation is not an inimical activity. Translation is about friendliness.
- 2- Language offers choices but does not dictate them. (De Beaugrande, 1994, p. 9)
- 3- “The way in which people speak, construct their sentences, choose their vocabulary (according to the formal/informal situation they are in, to their geographical origin and so on) reveals much about their culture.” (Armellino, 2008, para. 3)

Such aspects in translation as a culturally expressive phenomenon make the examples I offer below hopefully explanatory of my discussion of communicating culture in translation when the issue of accuracy and visibility versus equivalency/acceptability and invisibility presents itself in the translation process. Such an issue is grounds for professional translators, translation educators, translation theorists, and translation enterprises to willingly re-debate translation practices and strategies and how translation is thought of. Re-debating can take the form of the following questions which are only suggestive but not exhaustive, as my colleagues in the profession can enrich this re-debate with their experiences and valuable knowledge as well:

- 1- Did equivalence become a synonym for acceptability in the translation profession?
- 2- What is the context of communicating the way of thinking of the source text culture? Is this context accuracy bound or acceptability bound? Or is it the context of imparting and accessing *accurate and clear* knowledge about the source text culture?
- 3- What is our definition of accuracy as professional translators, translation educators and theorists, and as translation enterprises?
- 4- How can we re-define the role of the translator in light of the above questions and the ensuing discussion?
- 5- How much control does the translator have in his “translation behaviour” (Mazid, 2007, p. 21) and “establishing legitimacy” (Mazid, 2007, p. 26) of his translation strategies, should he adopt the role of the communicator of the source culture?
- 6- What kind of pressure does the translator undergo when he redefines his role as a communicator of the source culture?

Islam-specific terms offer fertile soil for discussing accuracy and clarity in communicating the conceptual reality of the source language text in translation. For the purpose and scope of this paper, four words are focused on:

- 1- [أسلم] Revert vs. convert
- 2- [العدة] Iddah vs. waiting period
- 3- [خلع] Khul' vs. divorce/divorce by redemption/divorce initiated by a woman
- 4- [مهر] Mahr vs. dower/dowry

The above stated English translated version(s) are widely used in translation, but are they conceptually accurate? In conducting a conceptual contrastive analysis between these words and their common English translations, it is possible to trace the accuracy and clarity of cultural conceptual communication or lack of it, and evaluate the quality of translation.

[أسلم] Revert vs. Convert

In a religious document signifying a Christian Arab person's "conversion" to Islam, the title of that document states "Conversion to Islam Document." The terminological use of "conversion" is deemed inaccurate conceptually as it should rather be instead "reversion" to Islam. A linguistic analysis of both terms shows that according to *Merriam Webster's Dictionary* "revert" is an *intransitive verb* meaning:

- 1: To come or go back (as to a former condition, period, or subject)
- 2: to return to an ancestral type

By contrast and according to the same source, "convert" is a transitive verb meaning:

- 1: to bring over from one belief, view, or party to another

Aslama [أسلم]--meaning to embrace Islam--and revert are intransitive verbs in both Arabic and English respectively. Lack of transitivity aspect in this case supports the choice of "revert" as it matches the concept of a return not a change to an original state of faith.

Even though the English translation of embracing Islam as "conversion" is accepted and commonly used in the target language text, it is conceptually inaccurate. In this instance, the conceptual accuracy and clarity is communicated by choosing the word "revert", because it underlines the Islamic belief system that every person is born essentially a Muslim; therefore, the act of embracing Islam is a return, not a change, to an original state of creation and of being, which is called *fitra*. So what is *fitra*? According to the Islamic belief system, children are born with an innate sense of God, which is called *fitrah*: the original, pure faith i.e. Islam. More often than not, Muslims share an understanding of Islam that all people are born with a natural faith in God. The Qur'an (7: 172-173) states the definition of *fitrah* as a naturally born faith in God in the narration of how Adam's descendants upon coming into existence acknowledged the ultimate reality or deity:

وإذا أخذ ربك من بني آدم من ظهورهم ذريتهم وأشهدهم على أنفسهم ألست بربكم قالوا بلى شهدنا أن
تقولوا يوم القيامة إنا كنا عن هذا غافلين. أو تقولوا إنما أشرك آبائنا من قبل وكنا ذرية من بعدهم أفتهلكنا
بما فعل المبطلون. (Qur'an 7: 172-173)

When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?"- They said: "Yea! We do testify!" (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this we were never mindful": Or lest ye should say: "Our fathers before us may have taken false gods, but we are (their) descendants after them: wilt Thou then destroy us because of the deeds of men who were futile?"

Likewise, the reference of the concept of *fitrah* is evidenced in the Prophetic Hadith about the birth of newly born babies as essentially Muslims:

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: No babe is born but upon Fitra. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Polytheist. A person said: Allah's Messenger, what is your opinion if they were to die before that (before reaching the age of adolescence when they can distinguish between right and wrong)? He said: It is Allah alone Who knows what they would be doing. (Sahih Muslim, 033:6426)

As indicated, the whole concept of *fitra* which justifies the choice of “revert” as the accurate translation is totally eliminated when the word “conversion” is chosen as a translation. The concept in this text is easily translatable as the accurate word for it is available in English, yet “convert” is chosen as the acceptable translation, even though it fails in communicating the way of thinking expressed in the source language text. Approaching source texts conceptually and being attentive to conceptual diversity in diverse cultures can be manifested through terminological use in the act of translation. Therefore, in the context of contrastive conceptual analysis, it is important for the translator to think about conceptual diversity in both belief systems. As it is important to express this Islamic belief system in choosing ‘revert: *أسلم*’ when the source text is in Arabic, for instance, it is equally important to express the Christian/Western belief system, ‘convert: *غير دينه*’ when the source text is in English. The focal point is to reflect carefully in translation conceptual accuracy of the source text at hand.

[العدة] Iddah vs. Waiting Period

The term ‘iddah’ serves as another example in illustrating the importance of considering conceptual contrastive analysis in translation. The common translation of this term into English tends to be partial and ambiguous, if not misleading since it is translated as “waiting period” or as iddah (waiting period). Iddah means the waiting period following either the divorce of a Muslim woman or the death of her husband. Despite the fact that the wife is legally prohibited from contracting marriage during this waiting period, the duration of iddah differs in the case of the divorce of a Muslim woman versus the death of her husband. Iddah of Divorce (The Waiting Period after Divorce/Iddatul Talaq) lasts for three months, whereas iddah (The Waiting Period following death/Iddatul Wafat) of a widow lasts for four months and ten days.

Furthermore, in Islam, if a woman is not pregnant and her husband dies, she is to observe Iddah for four months and ten days — that is, she is not to marry during that period. If, however, she is pregnant, she is to observe the waiting period until the birth of the child — that is, marriage is not an option to her during that period.

Indeed, there are three types of iddah. When iddah is rephrased as “waiting period”, which iddah is being referred to? Does the phrase ‘waiting period’ imply three months, or one

month or four months and ten days? By contrast, 'iddah' comprises all aspects of the meaning and scenarios in its context and comprehensiveness. It is accurate, comprehensive, and clear whereas "waiting period" or even iddah (waiting period) is ambiguous and partial, not only in aspects of time specifications and context but also in gender specifications. Iddah is specific to women only. It is necessary for the reader to know that the term is gender specific.

The widespread translation of iddah as "waiting period" tends to be misleading as it does not specify conceptually which type of iddah is referred to. It is partial since it gives only one aspect of the concept, but fails in expressing the concept of iddah in its totality which renders the translation.

[خلع] Khul' vs. Divorce/Divorce by Redemption/Divorce Initiated by a Woman

Discussing the term khul' as the third example is intended to further explain the necessity of considering conceptual contrastive analysis in translation. Khul' is defined in Islam as the parting of a wife from her husband after compensating him materially. The parting is requested initially by the wife and is granted by the husband upon the wife's paying him a sum of money or an amount in kind. Khul' is translated into English essentially as "divorce", which is inaccurate because the concept and procedures of divorce Islamically do not exist in khul' but in Talaq [Arabic for divorce]. The concept of khul' as communicated in the source language text is basically lacking in English as the target language text. One comes across such translations:

Khul': a divorce by redemption;

Khul': divorce initiated by the wife in return for compensation, or

A divorce of this kind is called khul'.

So if khul' is not divorce, what is the context of khul' after all? The circumstances in which a Muslim woman has recourse to khul' is when she hates her husband for his physical appearance, character, religion, old age, weakness, or the like, and when she fears falling short of obeying him as ordained by Divinity. In such specific details or events, it is lawful for her *to take off* the marriage bond by paying compensation:

"... ولا يحل لكم أن تأخذوا مما آتيتموهن شيئاً إلا أن يخافا ألا يقيما حدود الله فإن خفتم ألا يقيما حدود الله فلا جناح عليهما فيما افتدت به..." (Qur'an 2:229)

... It is not lawful for you, (Men), to take back any of your gifts (from your wives), except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah. If ye (judges) do indeed fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah, there is no blame on either of them if she gives something for her freedom. . . .

Khul' in the above stated definition is also evidenced in Sunnah as narrated in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith collection of Sunni Islam:

"The wife of Thabit bin Qais came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "O Allah's Messenger! I do not blame Thabit for defects in his character or his religion, but I, being a Muslim, dislike to behave in an un-Islamic manner (if I remain with him)." On that Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) said (to her), "Will you give back the

garden which your husband has given you (as Mahr)?" She said, "Yes." Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Thabit, "O Thabit! Accept your garden, and divorce her once." (Sahih Al-Bukhari 7:197-O.B)

Substituting divorce for khul' is inaccurate since it does not create the same conceptual associations particular to the source text. Divorce in modern day Western context of the word can be initiated by both a husband and a wife where everything is divided 50/50 upon divorce, in most cases. The wife is free to remarry after divorce immediately. By contrast and in the context of Khul', the Muslim wife has to pay back the *Mahr* to the husband. She is not entitled to take anything from him apart from her alimony payments during Iddah of Khul'. The husband is not entitled to take anything from his wife's property or money. He remains responsible and obligated for the financial well-being of the children of the marriage, if applicable. The wife can remarry only after the expiration of Iddah time as applicable to Khul'. The husband can remarry at any time, even during his wife's Iddah time. But the reality remains that Khul' is not divorce in Islam, because Khul' means the following:

- 1- The wife initiates the parting.
- 2- It is redemption because the wife redeems herself with what she pays for her husband, as the basis for redemption is evidenced in the Qur'an and Sunnah.
- 3- The expression Khul' means "to take off" and it is a reference to taking off a garment, because "men and women are each other's garments [which is metaphorical] for mutual support, mutual comfort, and mutual protection, fitting into each other as a garment fits the body. A garment also is both for show and concealment." (Ali, 1999, p. 75). This metaphorical likeness and implied comparison is formally expressed in the Qur'an (2:187):

"أحل لكم ليلة الصيام الرفث إلى نسائكم هن لباس لكم وأنتم لباس لهن . . ."

"Permitted to you, on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and ye are their garments . . ."

- 4- There has to be a reason for khul'.
- 5- Both the husband and the wife should agree to khul'. Such mutual agreement is not necessarily a condition of divorce as the latter is exclusive to the husband. The judge can also oblige the husband with khul'.
- 6- Khul' can take place during the wife's menses or after that. There is no time restraint regarding Khul' based on the Qur'an (2:229):

" . . . فلا جناح عليهما فيما اقتدت به . . . "

" . . . there is not blame on either of them if she gives something for her freedom . . ."

Lack of time restraint of initiating khul' is further supported by Prophetic Hadith. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) did not inquire from Thabit bin Qais whether his wife was having her period, or became pure from the menstrual discharge/or her discharge of blood stopped [Arabic verb is tahourat تطهرت]. Tataharat تطهرت and ettaharat اطهرت mean she "cleansed, or purified herself by washing, from the [pollution of] the menstrual discharge." (Lane, 1997, p. 1887). While it is prohibited to initiate divorce during the wife's menstruation in order not to lengthen her Iddah' time, in the case of khul', it is the

wife who initiates the parting by Khul' and accepts lengthening her Iddah' time. Therefore, it is permissible in Islam to initiate Khul' during menstruation.

- 7- After Khul', a woman is in charge of herself. She decides if she wants to reconcile with her husband or not, because she has already redeemed herself with money. The husband in this case --unlike divorce-- is not free to reconcile with her during her Iddah, because she became "separated, severed, disunited, cut off" (Lane, 1997, p. 285) by Khul' from the husband [Arabic verb is banat بانن]. If she accepts to reconcile with him during her Iddah time, he needs to initiate a new marriage contract and pay a new Mahr. In comparison, the wife during Iddah of divorce is still considered a wife, and the husband is free to reconcile with her during Iddah of divorce whether she accepts reconciliation or not.
- 8- Iddah of Khul' is only one menstrual period to rule out pregnancy, whereas it is three menstruations for Iddah of divorce in order to lengthen the time for the possibility of reconciliation and to allow the husband more time for "rawiyya روية" meaning "inspection, examination, consideration, or thought, of an affair without haste" (Lane, 1997, p. 1196).
- 9- A woman after Khul' can re-marry after one month. A woman after divorce can re-marry after three months. Hence Khul' is not divorce.
- 10- Divorce (Talaq in Arabic) applies to a woman who 'was left to go her way, or separated from her husband [by a sentence of divorce]' (Lane, 1997, p. 1871). Khul' is not one of the two divorces (with a reconciliation between) allowed for the husband. It is "faskh" which signifies "undoing, dissolving, or annulling" (Lane, 1997, p. 2396). One says in Arabic "Fasakhtou 'anni thaoubi "فسخت عني ثوبي" meaning "I cast, or cast off, from me my garment." (Lane, 1997, p. 2395). In this sequence, the same metaphor of *taking off* the garment in the context of khul' comes to mind.
- 11- Only the man has the right to pronounce the formula of divorce. Consequently, all the above stated differences constitute that khul' is not divorce in Islam. Therefore, the translation of Khul' as divorce is conceptually inaccurate even though one might argue that the outcome is the same, yet the process, circumstances, and concept are quite different.

[مهر] Mahr vs. Dower/Dowry

The term "Mahr" is the fourth and final example in support of the necessity of contrastive conceptual analysis in translation. Substituting dowry/dower for Mahr changes the idea of Mahr totally and renders the translation inaccurate, inequivalent, and unacceptable. The common translations into English of Mahr are dower, dowry, and a bride's price. But these versions, despite being stereotypical at best, are inaccurate for the following reasons:

- 1- There is no concept of dower or dowry in Islam.
- 2- In Islam, the bride or her parents have no obligation to give a dowry, or any gift in cash or in kind to the bridegroom.
- 3- Mahr is an obligatory condition of marriage, without which the marriage cannot be registered legally.
- 4- Mahr is a Muslim or non-Muslim (Christian or Jewish) bride's right.
- 5- Mahr in Islam signifies a bridal gift that the husband gives to his wife as a token of his commitment. It also helps her prepare herself for marriage should she be short of financial means.

6- Mahr in Islam signifies making the husband responsible for the financial obligations of a family as part of his marital responsibilities from the inception of the marriage contract. This responsibility contradicts with the meaning of dower or dowry.

7- The husband is not allowed to take Mahr back except in the case of Khul' as explicated below:

“In any case, a man is not allowed to ask back for any gifts or property he may have given to the wife. This is for the protection of the economically weaker sex. Lest that protective provision itself work against the woman's freedom, an exception is made . . . If there is any fear that in safeguarding her economic rights, her very freedom of person may suffer, the husband refusing the dissolution of marriage, and perhaps treating her with cruelty, then, in such exceptional cases, it is permissible to give some material consideration to the husband, but the need and equity of this should be submitted to the judgment of impartial judges, i.e. properly constituted courts. A divorce of this kind is called Khul'.” (Ali, 1999, pp. 92-93).

In comparison with Mahr in the context of Islam, a dower or dowry means the following:

- 1- Money or property brought by a bride to her husband at marriage.
- 2- Generally the husband is to return the dowry in case of divorce or the death of the wife when still childless.
- 3- It is considered the right of the husband.

As deduced from contrasting the concepts of Mahr and dower/dowry/bride's price, the concepts are incompatible. Hence the use of dower, dowry, or bride's price is not terminologically accurate for conveying the concept which is embedded in Islam as a religious and cultural system.

The above conceptual contrastive analyses reviewed on four terms clearly indicate the necessity of not giving up the reality of the source language text conceptual identity for the sake of acceptability, simply because it renders the translation conceptually inaccurate, which means the quality of translation is questionable.

The Role of the Translator

Translation enterprises tend to focus on the (in)visibility of the translator for the sake of quality production of texts. When it is accepted, the translator is invisible. When it is contested, the translator is visible. When the text is acceptable, the meaning is equivalent at best. When the text is contested, the meaning is not equivalent. This quality of texts depends on accuracy but really accuracy is decided by acceptability of the produced discourse by the target culture at large, specifically the target readers of the produced culture. Mostly, there is a tendency in translation practice to overlook the question of whether the translation is conceptually accurate or not. In addition, the pretext of equivalency in the context of acceptability is politics in disguise, because acceptability as a constraint offers a medium of control of information and restriction of access to information about the source language text.

Nevertheless, the debate over accuracy vs. acceptability neutralizes the politics of language and discourse. But it sheds light on the politics of the translator. To communicate is to perceive culture in terms of reality, i.e. facts and truths about the subject matter. But how can this reality be communicated?

Shaping the Translator's Role

Communicating the reality of the source language text shapes the translator's role as the communicator of the source language text culture. It unveils the shrouded space of the translator and allows the text to tell its own story. Indeed, the translator is needed to let the text tell its own story. It renders the translator's (in)visibility as a fallacy, a Mark Twainian make belief. In excluding this fallacy, I attempt to shed some light on the pressures the translator might undergo in the context of translating the conceptual accuracy of the source language text --Islam-specific concepts in the sequence of this argument-- especially when the concepts per se are non-existent in the target language text. Such pressures could be external or internal such as:

- 1- Translator's interests whether ideological or professional.
- 2- Translation enterprise's mission, interests, and profit.
- 3- How the minority identity of the source language is viewed in the dominant culture work place.
- 4- How the translator views his minority identity in a dominant culture. Does he have issues to reconcile with concerning his identity or belief system?
- 5- Willingness or lack of willingness on the part of the translator to divulge or share knowledge about the source language text in terms of imparting accurate concepts in translation.
- 6- Profiling/labeling among peers at work.
- 7- Conflict in monitoring—translators versus revisors-- when translators have different ideological approaches to translation per se.
- 8- Client's satisfaction.
- 9- Performance evaluation.
- 10- Speed according to productivity measures in the workplace.
- 11- Quality control (according to what standard: accuracy or acceptability?) in the workplace
- 12- Incentives on the job.
- 13- Flow of work.

From reviewing [أسلم] Revert vs. convert, [العدة] iddah vs. waiting period, [خلع] khul' vs. divorce, and [مهر] Mahr vs. dower/dowry, contrasted conceptually, it is evident that the concepts are intrinsically different. The translation strategies used in the above examples were substitution, deletion, and re-phrasing. But the end results were inaccurate whether totally or partially, needless to mention ambiguating the concept at hand and misleading the reader. Considering this intrinsic conceptual difference constitutes a point of contact where the translator becomes visible in playing a functional role in establishing an understanding relationship between two cultures in one world. The translator can in this instance help the Western reader cross the bridge to the other side to understand the concept of the source text in its context. How? That depends on the translator's creativity in the given context. The discussion offered here is descriptive not prescriptive.

It is true that "In such sporadic instances of translating source text concepts that are absent in the target text concepts, translation as a formation of alternative discourse ceases to be mediation between alternative formal systems or structures via sharable 'meanings'" (De Beaugrande, 1994, p. 3). However, it is in the very such instances that the translator's active role becomes visible in manifesting conceptual diversity in the act of translation to communicate

alternative culture: “It is only when they are in contact, actually using texts, that people from different cultures can reach and understand one another properly.” (Hatim, 1997, p. 157).

The Concern

The concern here is not with an equivalent response to the term since “the response can never be identical because of different cultural, historical, and situational settings.” (House, 1998, p. 9). It is rather with rendering accurately the concept/the thinking pattern as it is in its cultural setting as comprehending the text in its own cultural context achieves accurate readability of the text and accurate quality translation that is communicative conceptually and culturally.

The marked interest here is with engaging the reader in the source text culture through comprehension/readability of the source text cultural concept. Through such engagement, evaluation and contrast, cultural understanding can be achieved. The issue here is not acceptability of the source text concept, but knowing it and understanding it in its own context. The matter of consideration here is with integrating knowledge of the other through accuracy of translating the source language text concepts and in integrating the identity of the other through language in translation, as well.

Theoretical Inquiries

The theoretical inquiries that this paper leads to lie in what such awareness do to translation education and training in terms of:

- 1- Where are we?
- 2- What does the translator need?
- 3- What can the translator do?
- 4- Are current translations reflecting source text visions and ways of thinking or are we copying from others blindly [such as Mahr vs. dower/dowry]?
- 5- How can language in translation integrate and support accurate knowledge of the other?
- 6- How can language in translation integrate the other?

Recommendations

In fact, there is a need for conceptual translation and contrastive conceptual analysis in translation education. Accurate knowledge based translation to bridge the knowledge divide between the West and Islamic cultural thinking patterns is needed. There is a necessity for commitment on the part of the translator to:

- 1- Reconcile with his visibility.
- 2- Communicate culture not to compromise one culture for the sake of another.
- 3- Not marginalize a source text concept, because it is absent from the dominant culture of the target language text.
- 4- Invoke and uphold his functional role in shaping discourse/knowledge, influencing discourse/knowledge and communicating the discourse/knowledge of the source language text/culture accurately in order to bridge cultures accurately.
- 5- Consider that a translator translates essential concepts not words and that translation is a human functional/conceptual activity.
- 6- Maintain that accuracy is measured by expressing the totality of meaning commensurate with the conceptual context it expresses.

- 7- Note the fact that accuracy does not mean necessarily equivalency.
- 8- Maintain that a translated text becomes acceptable when it is conceptually accurate in its own source text context.
- 9- Recognize that he has a functional critical role in shaping the translation we need today.

Conclusion

The necessity of considering conceptual accuracy in translation in the context of cultural communication can be at best summed up in the following Quranic indication (49:13):

يا أيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى وجعلناكم شعوباً وقبائل لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم إن الله عليم خبير.

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

Indeed, the necessity of knowing each other underscores the functional and critical role of the translator in providing through his choices--that language offers him-- access to *accurate* knowledge about the other, and in erasing fallacies about the other through translation especially when translation is used in the context of policy making, international relations and scholarly feminist research about women of the Middle East. And while this paper suggests using contrastive conceptual analysis as a measure in evaluating translation quality, it is in the context of discussing translation quality as conceptually accurate based on the source language text that translation as a friendly activity becomes one important, if not critical, functional venue in cross-cultural communication, accessing *accurate* knowledge through reflecting the vocabulary that reveals so much about the culture, and knowing one another in the process of bridging cultures and the knowledge divide today.

Author's Notes

The author consulted the Holy Qur'an (King Fahd Edition), and Ali Abdullah Yusuf translation of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an to provide explanation and evidence for the cited examples in terms of conceptual accuracy assessment. Also, the following sources were consulted even though the paper does not state direct or indirect quotes from them:

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