



**LEXICO-CULTURAL PARAMETER IN KHAN AND AL-HILALI'S
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE QUR'AN**

By

SALWANI BINTI SABTU

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

January 2024

FBMK 2024 26

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Chairman : Syed Nurulakla bin Syed Abdullah, PhD

Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication

The translation of the Noble Qur'an into English has been a complex and challenging endeavor since Alexander Ross's initial attempt in 1649. While some English translations have been well-received by their intended readers, others have faced criticism for their unfavourable linguistic style and translation methods. This difficulty arises from the significant structural and cultural differences between Arabic and English, leading some translators to struggle in accurately conveying the Qur'an's meaning, even with basic lexical items, due to insufficient understanding of the semantic and cultural nuances. Furthermore, some of the translation strategies employed were inappropriate, making the result unacceptable to the target readers. Among the English translations, the work of Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Dr. Muhammad Taqiuddin al-Hilali has also faced scrutiny, particularly in the West. Therefore, this study aims to examine the lexico-cultural parameter of their Qur'an translation and analyse the translation strategies they employed, and their impact on the lexical items of the Qur'an, focusing on the perspective of Brunei

Darussalam. This specific translation was chosen as the subject of this research because it aligns with the thoughts and teachings of the *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (the Sunnis) and *Madhhab Shāfi'ī* (the Shafi'i School), which are prevalent in Brunei Darussalam. To achieve the objectives of this research, theoretical frameworks such as Eugene Nida's (1945) cultural categorisation and Javier Franco Aixela's (1996) translation strategies for cultural-specific items were utilised. The research design adopted a qualitative approach, involving the analysis of 150 culture-specific lexical items from various chapters of the Qur'an. The findings revealed that Khan and al-Hilali employed eight different translation strategies for culture-specific lexical items, with a preference for a combination of 'orthographic adaptation' and 'extra-textual gloss.' In addition, the variety of translation strategies that they employed was effective in reflecting the cultural and religious values of the selected lexical items of the Qur'an while presenting their real and precise meaning in the second language. While Khan and al-Hilali's translation approach effectively reflected the cultural and religious values inherent in the Qur'an's lexical items, it also led to a translation that was lengthy and cumbersome. However, authorities in Brunei found this detailed approach beneficial as it enhanced understanding at the lexical level and remained faithful to the religious beliefs upheld in Brunei Darussalam.

Keywords: Culture, Lexis, Parameter, Qur'an, Translation

SDG: GOAL 4: Quality Education

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PARAMETER LEKSIKO-BUDAYA DALAM TERJEMAHAN AL-QUR'AN
BAHASA INGGERIS OLEH KHAN DAN AL-HILALI**

Oleh

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Penterjemahan kitab suci al-Qur'an kepada bahasa Inggeris merupakan usaha yang kompleks dan mencabar sejak percubaan kali pertama oleh Alexander Ross pada tahun 1649. Meskipun terdapat beberapa terjemahan bahasa Inggeris al-Qur'an yang diterima dengan baik oleh para pembaca sasaran, sebahagiannya menerima kritikan disebabkan gaya bahasa dan teknik terjemahannya yang teruk. Kerumitan ini didorong oleh perbezaan dari segi struktur dan budaya antara bahasa Arab dengan Inggeris, yang mengakibatkan sesetengah penterjemah bergelut dalam menyampaikan maksud sebenar kandungan al-Qur'an ke dalam bahasa sasaran dengan tepat, walaupun bagi item leksikal yang paling mudah. Hal ini disebabkan mereka tidak memahami sepenuhnya aspek semantik dan nuansa budaya item berkenaan, serta strategi penterjemahan yang digunakan juga tidak sesuai, hingga menjadikannya tidak dapat diterima oleh para pembaca sasaran. Antara pelbagai terjemahan bahasa Inggeris al-Qur'an, terjemahan yang dihasilkan oleh Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan dan Dr. Muhammad

Taqiuddin al-Hilali juga tidak terkecuali daripada kritikan, terutamanya di Barat. Oleh yang demikian, kajian ini dijalankan untuk meneliti parameter leksiko-budaya dalam terjemahan al-Qur'an berkenaan, di samping menganalisis strategi penterjemahan yang digunakan serta impaknya terhadap item leksikal, dengan memberikan tumpuan pada perspektif Brunei Darussalam. Terjemahan Khan dan al-Hilali ini telah dipilih sebagai subjek kajian kerana penulisan dan penghasilannya adalah sejajar dengan aliran pemikiran serta ajaran *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* dan *Madhhab Shāfi'i* yang dipegang oleh Brunei Darussalam. Untuk mencapai objektif kajian, rangka kerja teoretikal seperti teori pengkategorian budaya oleh Eugene Nida (1945) dan strategi penterjemahan item khusus budaya oleh Javier Franco Aixela (1996) telah diaplikasikan. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang melibatkan sebanyak 150 sampel item leksikal khusus budaya yang telah dipilih daripada pelbagai surah dalam al-Qur'an. Hasil kajian ini mendapati bahawa Khan dan al-Hilali telah menggunakan lapan strategi yang berbeza untuk menterjemahkan item-item berkenaan kepada bahasa Inggeris, dan gabungan '*orthographic adaptation*' serta '*extra-textual gloss*' menjadi strategi yang paling banyak digunakan. Selain itu, kepelbagaian strategi penterjemahan yang diterapkan oleh mereka adalah berkesan dalam mencerminkan nilai budaya dan agama bagi item-item leksikal Qur'an berkenaan, dan pada masa yang sama menghuraikan maksudnya yang sebenar dengan tepat dalam bahasa kedua. Meskipun kaedah penterjemahan Khan dan al-Hilali mencerminkan dengan berkesan nilai budaya dan agama yang terdapat dalam item leksikal al-Qur'an, kaedah tersebut juga mencetuskan terjemahan yang terlalu panjang dan memakan ruang. Walau bagaimanapun, pihak penguasa di Brunei menganggap terjemahan Khan dan

al-Hilali sebagai yang terbaik kerana terjemahan sedemikian bukan sahaja memberikan pemahaman yang menyeluruh bagi kandungannya hingga peringkat leksikal, tetapi juga benar-benar menepati pegangan akidah yang diamalkan oleh Brunei Darussalam.

Kata Kunci: Budaya, Leksis, Parameter, Qur'an, Terjemahan

SDG: MATLAMAT 4: Pendidikan Berkualiti



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, all praise be to Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, for giving me the strength, perseverance, wisdom, and His countless blessings throughout my journey to complete this study.

The path to completing this thesis has been fraught with both professional challenges and personal adversities. I am profoundly grateful for the enduring support of my supervisor, Dr Syed Nurulakla bin Syed Abdullah, whose steadfast belief in my capabilities and academic potential. It was with his endless encouragement, patience, guidance, advice, and help that I was able to go through all the heavy hurdles and struggles that I went through to accomplish this task. My appreciation also goes to the members of my supervisory committee, Dr Salina binti Husain and Dr Ilyana binti Jalaluddin, whose support and assistance had lightened my research path.

To my beloved husband, Mohammad Zefri bin Haji Besar, and my dearest sons, Muhammad Zuhair and Muhammad Zikri, words are not enough to express how thankful I am to them and how much love I have for them. They are truly my backbones; their unconditional love, unwavering support, and understanding kept me going and made me stronger each day to execute this task until the end. To my beloved parents, Sabtu bin Haji Asar, and Hajah Rohani binti Saidin, and also my brother and sisters, Haji Mohamad Sahraini, Dayangku Hajah Ida Fariani, and Hajah Surayani, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your constant support and prayers, and also for always having faith in me.

To all my friends, peers and classmates, who were with me along the way, thank you very much for being wonderful and supportive, and for making this journey not only possible but also enjoyable. I also would like to give a special shout out to my cousin, Mohd Izzuddin bin Alias, who had been a great help and a lifesaver throughout this whole journey. His assistance and contribution to the completion of this thesis have been invaluable and I am truly grateful for his kindness.

Last but not least, this endeavour would not have been possible without the generous support and scholarship from the Government of Brunei Darussalam, through the Public Service Department. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity and for enabling me to pursue my dream.

May Allah the Almighty bless all of you and reward you abundantly.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSLI	Culture-Specific Lexical Item
SL	Source Language
TL	Target Language
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
ASWJ	<i>Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah</i>



TRANSLITERATION TABLE

Consonants			
ARABIC LETTER	ROMAN LETTER	ARABIC LETTER	ROMAN LETTER
ء	'	ض	ḍ
ب	b	ط	ṭ
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	th	ع	'
ج	j	غ	Gh
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	hh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

Short Vowel	
ARABIC	ROMAN
اَ	a
اِ	i
اُ	u

Long Vowel	
ARABIC	ROMAN
آ / اِىَ	ā
إِىَ	ī
أُىَ	ū

Diphthong	
ARABIC	ROMAN
أَوْ	aw
أَيْ	ay
يِىَ	iyy
وِىَ	uww

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter covers the core components of this research, which include the research background, the problem statement, its objectives, and the questions. In addition, it also highlights the significance of this research, its scope and limitations, as well as the definition of its key terms.

1.1 Research Background

The Noble Qur'an is the literal words of Allah the Almighty, which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him - PBUH) as a miracle and sign of his prophethood. It is indeed unique, supreme, incomparable, and unparalleled from every aspect as it contains divine message from Allah and guidance for the mankind.

The Qur'an is without exception regarded by Muslim scholars and theologians as the source of guidance for the whole Muslim community in the world in all facets of life, as well as the indication of the messengers' authenticity. It serves as proof of the prophethood and its mission, as well as being unchallenged until the end of the world. It is also a testament to the fact that it is an everlasting miracle that confronts all generations, man-made ideologies, worldviews and nations to come. Even in the twenty-first century, it remains the most read book ever and the Book par excellence (Ushama, 2017, p. 19).

Tracing back to the history, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was raised in a society that was remarkably excellent in literary understanding and eloquence, with pure language and rhetoric. Therefore, God revealed the Qur'an in such a way that it presented people with an ongoing challenge to produce something resembling it, whether it be ten chapters or a single chapter, which is still ongoing today (Ushama, 2017, p. 19).

The 'challenge', which comes in the Qur'an in a variety of ways, can be identified right once as one of the unique and inimitable characteristics of the Qur'an. Such a Qur'anic 'challenge' rendered the existence of pagan Arabs useless. The opponents of the Qur'an were rendered helpless by the challenge it issued. The Qur'an's coherence, rhetoric, structure, and other eloquent stylistic elements overcame the opponents' hearts and subdued their perceptions. Even though they took great pride in their eloquence and unparalleled literary ability, they were unable to meet the Qur'anic challenge of writing a book that was exactly like it. This was in response to queries from the people that cast doubt on the idea of revelation, or *waḥyu*, and prompted the Qur'an to be challenged (Ushama, 2017, pp. 269-270). This was stated a few times in the Qur'an in *sūrah al-Tūr*: 34, *Hūd*: 13-14, and *al-Baqarah*: 23.

Early Muslim history has shown that all of their endeavours have been in vain. This indicates that not even a verse from the Qur'an can be created by humans. At some point, it might be determined that no one could ever create something as unique as the Qur'an. In other words, the Qur'an implies that no one will be able to create something like it until the end of the world (Ushama, 2017, p. 270).

1.1.1 History of the Translation of the Qur'an

The fact that the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic and that it is a divine revelation that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) brought to all of humanity till the end of time rather than only to his own people makes it even more evident that the Qur'an needs to be translated. As the Qur'an makes clear in verse 158 of *sūrah al-A'raf*, and verse 28 of *surah Saba'*, the divine text states that the Prophet's mission was for all humanity, in contrast to past prophets whose teachings were primarily focused towards their own communities (Ushama, 2017, p. 317).

Verily, Islam is the only religion accepted by Allah as emphasized in verse 19 of *sūrah Āl-'Imrān* of the Qur'an. And everything about Islam can be found in the Qur'an; the concepts, principles, rules, laws, history, lessons, etc. Therefore, every Muslim is obliged to study the Qur'an thoroughly in order to be able to practice the way of life that is accepted by and pleasing to Allah.

Unquestionably, reading the Qur'an in Arabic, which is its original language, is the only way to comprehend its contents completely. However, as Islam has grown over time and more non-Arabic speaking communities have shown an increased interest in knowing more about this faith in general and the Qur'an in particular, it has become necessary to translate the Qur'an in other languages of the world in order to ensure that its message is understood by all mankind.

Saeed (2008, pp. 120-121) mentioned that Islamic history showed that there was some interest in translating at least some parts of the Qur'an even in the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The initial attempts mostly dealt with

translating from Arabic into Persian. This makes sense given that, after the Arabs, Persians played the most significant cultural and intellectual role in the development of early Islamic civilisation. They were the second largest language group to convert to Islam after Arabs. Salman al-Farisi, a Companion of the Prophet (PBUH) and one of the earliest Persians to convert to Islam, translated the first chapter of the Qur'an, which consisted of seven verses, into Persian.

According to Muslim tradition, it was also standard practise for the meaning of the Qur'an to be paraphrased in the local language after it was recited in Arabic in the early days of Islam. Some Arab rulers who ruled over recently conquered territories seemed to have occasionally shown an interest in translating parts of the Qur'an into the native tongues. Yet, there did not seem to have been any attempt to translate the complete Qur'an into another language throughout this early stage of Islamic history (Saeed, 2008, p. 121).

During the very early days of Islam, non-Muslims started to become interested in translating the Qur'an; some Christians, who resided in regions such as what is now Syria, started to translate passages of the Qur'an into Syriac. These translations were most likely the first ones done for polemical reasons, and they set the stage for further non-Muslim interest in translating the Qur'an in Europe (Saeed, 2008, pp. 121-122).

According to Abdul Raof (2001, p. 19), the Qur'an was first translated into a western language by the English scholar Robertus Retenensis in the twelfth century at the request of Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny. It was finished in

1143 and saw significant manuscript circulation. This mediaeval Latin version was published in Basel exactly four centuries later. It was written with an adversarial motive and filled with errors and misunderstandings. This was subsequently translated into Italian, German and Dutch. In 1647, a French businessman named Andre Du Ryer published a French translation in Paris. In 1776, another translation in Russian appeared in St. Petersburg.

In the meantime, Maracci produced another Latin translation of the Qur'an in 1689 which was accompanied with the Arabic text and quotations from numerous works of exegesis in Arabic, all of which were attentively matched and sufficiently muddled to paint the worst possible picture of Islam. His first work, 'A Refutation of the Qur'an', which stated that his goal was to denigrate Islam, supports this (Abdul Raof, 2001, p.20).

In 1649, the first English translation of the Qur'an was produced by Alexander Ross, a Scottish author. Its title was 'The Alcoran of Mahomet translated out of Arabique into French, by the Sieur Du Ryer ... And newly Englished, for the satisfaction of all that desire to look into the Turkish vanities'. As the title suggests, Ross translation was a copy of Du Ryer's 1647 French translation. Ross had a rudimentary command of French and no knowledge of Arabic. His translation was criticised as being imprecise and exhibiting both his Orientalist viewpoint and his fervent anti-Islamic sentiments (Saeed, 2008, p. 122).

Another English translation was produced by George Sale in 1734 which was based on the infamous Maracci version, right down to the linear notes and opening prologue (Abdul Raof, 2001, p.20). Entitled 'The Qur'an: Commonly

Called the Alkoran of Mohammed', it was criticised by some Muslims as it contained a number of omissions and erroneous translations and was written for missionary purposes. Despite that, it remained the standard reference for English readers until almost the end of the nineteenth century (Saeed, 2008, p. 122).

Another instance of an anti-Muslim author attacking Islam is seen in John Rodwell's English translation, which was released in 1861. Meanwhile, Edward Hendry Palmer's translation, which was published a decade later, falls short due to his admirable – yet completely futile – attempt to translate the Qur'an into informal English in order to mimic what he perceived as the 'rude and rugged' Arabic of the original (Abdul Raof, 2001, p.20).

The English translations of the Qur'an by Muslims only appeared in the twentieth century (Saleem, 2013). Muslim translators have taken up the challenge and produced reliable translations of the Qur'an in English, as a result of the amount of harm these non-Muslim translators have caused to the image of Islam, whether intentionally or unintentionally (Abdul Raof, 2001, p.20).

Mohammad Abdul Hakim Khan of Patiala was the first Muslim to translate the Qur'an into English in the year 1905. Then, in 1919, another rendition by Mirza Hairat from Delhi was released. Another one, which was a highly regarded work by Hafiz Gulam Sarwar appeared in 1930, although it was not published with the Arabic text. In the same year, 1930, Marmaduke Pickthall, an English Muslim, also published his version of the Qur'an translation (Abdul Raof, 2001, p.20).

Since then, numerous English translations by Muslim translators have been published up to the present day. Despite being translated by Muslims, some translations are favourably received while others receive criticism for their use of poor language, poor translation style, faulty translations, or inconsistent interpretations of Islamic doctrine or *aqidah*.

1.1.2 Translation of the Qur'an in Brunei Darussalam

As a Muslim nation, Brunei Darussalam places a significant emphasis on and honours the status of the Qur'an as the principal source and point of reference for the teachings of Islam, which are adhered to by the vast majority of its citizens. However, since it was originally revealed in Arabic, not all Bruneians are able to read and understand it directly as the lingua franca for this country is Malay or English. As a result, they had to rely on books of translation of the Qur'an in other languages in order to grasp and comprehend its contents.

However, the Qur'an translations that were available in the state were not produced by the native Bruneians. As a matter of fact, Brunei Darussalam has long been dependent on translations of the Qur'an in other languages that were done by foreign translators and published abroad.

Nevertheless, these foreign translations and publications have to go through a screening and reviewing procedure by the Islamic Da'wah Centre, a division within the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Brunei, before they are permitted to be used for educational purposes, sale, exhibitions, etc. This matter is vital in order to ensure that the contents in the translations are accurate, authentic, and do

not conflict the beliefs of *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (ASWJ) (the Sunnis) and the teachings of *Madhhab Shāfi'i* (the Shafi'i School), which are upheld by the Muslim community in the country.

Apart from that, it also aims to assist the public in selecting the appropriate and decent Qur'an translation, considering that there are currently numerous varieties of the Qur'an translation in different languages that are readily available everywhere. Furthermore, not everyone in this country is aware of the veracity and integrity of these translations, especially the newly converted Muslims and those without a strong Islamic heritage.

It was only in 2007 that the Government of Brunei Darussalam, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, began the process of producing its own translation of the Qur'an in the Malay language entitled '*Mushaf Brunei Darussalam dan Terjemahannya*' (the Mushaf of Brunei Darussalam and Its Translation). The project, which was completed in 2013 and totally executed by a team of local Bruneians who graduated from al-Azhar University in Egypt, was in fact commanded by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'dul Khair Waddien, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, as he wanted Brunei to have its own translation of the Qur'an.

Yet, it is only beneficial for Malay readers, whereas the English-speaking community in Brunei still depends on the English translations of the Qur'an that were published abroad. At this point, the importance of reviewing and evaluating these foreign translations becomes apparent in order to make sure that the

contents are faithful to the source text and free of distortion.

1.2 Problem Statement

Culture-specific items are those words which refer to objects and concepts that are specific and peculiar to a given culture (Sadiq, 2010; Ranzato, 2013). It is their distinct cultural features that make them difficult for anyone originating from a different linguistic and cultural environment to perceive them.

Therefore, it is relatively important to distinguish the characteristics of culture-specific lexical items (CSLIs) in order to differentiate them from the common lexical items. If every language has different semantic ranges and different ways of grouping objects and concepts, in the same manner, it is necessary for culture-specific vocabularies to be classified for they carry a whole world of concepts and associations with them (Ranzato, 2013, pp. 73-74).

Various scholars have placed great importance on the classification or the categorization of CSLIs. Among them are Nida (1945), Newmark (1988), Aixela (1996), and Baker (2011). Nida's (1945, p. 196) cultural categorization is basically based on the problems encountered during translation process which are essentially the problems of equivalence; they are ecology, material culture, social culture, religious culture, and linguistic culture. Newmark (1988, p. 95), adapting Nida's cultural categorization, distinguished cultural words in five categories; ecology, material culture, social culture, organisations/customs/ideas, and gestures and habits. Aixela (1996, p. 59) assigned CSLIs to two basic categories; the first is proper nouns, and the

second is common expressions which include the world of objects, institutions, habits and opinions. Meanwhile, Baker (2011, p. 18) suggested a few cultural categories which are also basically the common problems of non-equivalence at word level which may be abstract or concrete relating to religious belief, social custom as well as type of food.

In relation to this, several studies have been carried out to investigate the classifications of CSLIs in different translational discourses. For example, Akhesmeh et al. (2015) examined the CSLIs in the translation of the Azerbaijan Turkish famous epic '*Dede Qurqud*' into English based on Thriveni's cultural classification and discovered that 'proper names' are mostly found in the epic. Amininadji (2016) analysed the CSLIs in a Persian literary play '*Aroosak-ha*' and its English translation '*Marionettes*' based on Newmark's categorization and found only three cultural categories which are material, social and organization. Meanwhile, Noraziah (2014) in her study found that all the five categories of CSLIs proposed by Newmark existed in the Malay novel '*Rimba Harapan*' and its translation in French '*La Jungle de l'Espoir*'.

There seems to be a lack of study pertaining to CSLIs and their classifications in religious text translation, particularly the translation of the Holy Qur'an. There are only a few, but with limitations in the scope of the studies such as the translation of the culture-bound Islamic law terms in three different English translations of the Qur'an by Shakir, Yusuf Ali and Pickthall (Moradi and Sadeghi, 2014), the translation of nine Qur'anic CSLIs in three English translations of the Qur'an by Khan and al-Hilalil, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Marmaduke Pickthall (Al-Azzam et al., 2015), the translation of the Arabic

culture-bound term '*jilbab*' in 54 Persian and 12 English translations of the Qur'an (Robati, 2016), the translation of the religious culture-bound term '*sakinah*' in five different English translations of the Qur'an (Mahasneh, 2018), and the translation of CSLIs in the English translation of the Qur'an by Irving, which were confined to *sūrah al-Baqarah* (Valipour et al., 2019).

Considering this fact, the researcher viewed that there is a need to explore the classifications of CSLIs in the translation of the Qur'an in English in a thorough and comprehensive way as the divine text is profoundly rich with many Arab and Muslim acts, customs, traditions, beliefs, activities and so on, where their equivalents are hard to obtain in other languages because of their cultural idiosyncrasies.

Dickins et al. (2002, p. 29) asserted that cultural differences are sometimes bigger obstacles to successful translation than linguistic differences.

Culture in translation indeed had caused many more complications or problems to the translator than do differences in language structure (Nida, 1964; Dickins et al., 2002). In this sense, many translation scholars have attached considerable importance to the strategies for rendering CSLIs. Newmark (1988) proposed a variety of procedures ranging from transference, cultural equivalent, neutralisation, literal translation, label, naturalisation, componential analysis, deletion, couplet, accepted standard translation, paraphrase, gloss, notes, and classifier. Venuti's (1995) approach is more general which provides both linguistic and cultural guidance; they are either target oriented (domestication), or source oriented (foreignization). Dickins et al. (2002) offered five strategies

which they dubbed 'cultural transposition'; exoticism, calque, cultural transplantation, cultural borrowing, and communicative translation. Meanwhile, Ivir (2002) suggested seven strategies which are more precise and comprehensible; borrowing, definition or paraphrase, literal translation, substitution, lexical creation, addition, and omission.

Several previous studies on the translation of the Holy Qur'an in English indicated that there is a variety in the strategies that were employed by the translators to convey the meaning of the Qur'anic Arabic CSLIs into English.

Amjad and Farahani (2013) examined the translation of the Qur'anic divine names of Allah in English by three different translators namely Qarai, Shakir and Nikayin who provided their translations in phrase-by-phrase, prose, and poetry forms respectively. The study, which followed the taxonomy suggested by Chesterman for translation strategies, found that different strategies, mostly the semantic strategies, were adopted by these translators. Qarai considered the 'expansion' strategy as the most appropriate one for attaining semantic equivalence and lexical adequacy. Shakir preferred the 'near-synonymy' and 'transposition' strategies for his translation, while Nikayin mostly employed 'near-synonymy' and 'expansion' strategies.

Kargozari and Akrami (2015) in their study examined and compared ten Qur'anic proper nouns, specifically names of places, objects, calendar events and people, and their English translations done by four translators, namely Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, and Saffarzadeh based on the Vinay and Darbelnet translation model. The findings substantiated that besides utilising the English

equivalents, the most frequent approaches applied by the translators were the 'borrowing' (transliteration and transposition) and 'calque' (literal translation) strategies. The results also demonstrated that, to some extent, the translators' different sects (*Sunni* and *Shi'a*) have played a determining role on the strategies that they adopted in translating those proper nouns.

Another study by Issa (2017) examined the renditions of the Prophets' names in two English translations of the Qur'an by Yusuf Ali and al-Hilali and Khan with the aim of investigating the translators' awareness of 'transliteration' and 'naturalization' as the translation strategies in dealing with the Prophets' names. It was found that both translations opted for 'naturalization' in most cases and mistranslated a few names by transliterating them.

Meanwhile, Mahasneh (2018) investigated the translation of the religious culture-bound term *sakinah* in five different English translations of the Qur'an by Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Pickthall, Khan and al-Hilali and Itani. His study, which adapted Newmark's framework, discovered that there were discrepancies among the five translators in their renderings of the term and concluded that transliteration, definition, or explanation are the best strategies to render such a concept from Arabic into English.

Almahasees and al-Taher (2021) in their study analysed the translation of ten Qur'anic CSLIs, which are related to Arabian habits, in ten different English translations of the Qur'an. The study, which was based on Ivir's translation framework, revealed that 'literal translation' was the most frequently employed strategy by the ten translators. On the other hand, 'addition' or 'paraphrase'

were chosen only in a minority of cases.

Alhaj (2022) examined three notable English translations of the Qur'an – Pickthall's, Khan and al-Hilali's, and Abdel Haleem's to peruse the cultural and semantic issues that these translators encountered in rendering the term '*al-kayd*' in *sūrah Yūsuf* into English. It was found that the three translators employed culturally equivalent and neutral explanation procedures, and word-for-word and sense-for-sense translation methods in rendering the Qur'anic term in question.

It seems that these previous studies were confined to certain Qur'anic terms or themes only. Since the Qur'an is abundantly rich with various cultural expressions involving different classifications, the researcher viewed it as important to carry out an in-depth study on the strategies to translate the various classifications of cultural lexis in the Qur'an, besides determining which translation method or procedure suits each classification well.

There are also a few previous literatures which discussed the implications of the translation strategies employed by the translators of the Qur'an. For example, Mohammed's (2005) assessment of the English translation of the Qur'an by Khan and al-Hilali discovered that the translators' strategy of inserting numerous interpolations of commentaries from the prominent exegetes (at-Tabari, al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir) in their translation made it particularly problematic, especially for the American Muslims.

Another study, which was conducted by al-Jabari (2008) on some respondents in Manchester and London, Britain, found that the English translation of the Qur'an by Yusuf Ali was less comprehensible because of the 'literal translation' approach, which resulted in either a text that made no sense or a cultural gap. It made the respondents confused and hence they failed to comprehend the intended meaning of the expressions. Similarly, al-Jabari found that literal translation is the central factor that impedes understanding of Arberry's English translation of the Qur'an.

By the same token, Jassem (2014) discovered that the Qur'an translation by Khan and al-Hilali is not well-received on stylistic and linguistic grounds. It is only preferred by the Saudis whose native language is not English, whereas most native English speakers deemed it repulsive.

In a study by Hassan and Menacere (2019), several non-Arabic readers showed some dissatisfaction about five English translations of the Qur'an by Arberry, Yusuf Ali, Abdel Haleem, Muhammad Asad, and Khan and al-Hilali, which they found to be accurate in conveying the text's overall message but lacking in accurately capturing collocations.

In this regard, the researcher has not come across any studies pertaining to the assessment of the English translation of the Qur'an in Brunei. Even though Brunei is a Malay country, the researcher believed that it was important to take into account Brunei's perspectives on the translations of the Qur'an in English that were produced by foreign translators since English is the second most common language in the Sultanate.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research attempts to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To examine the cultural categories of the culture-specific lexical items in Khan and al-Hilali's English translation of the Qur'an;
- 2) To identify the strategies employed by Khan and al-Hilali to translate the culture-specific lexical items in the Qur'an into English; and
- 3) To investigate the implication of Khan and al-Hilali's translation strategies on the culture-specific lexical items in the Qur'an from Brunei Darussalam's perspective.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the objectives as stated above, this research attempts to address the following questions:

- 1) What are the categories of the culture-specific lexical items in Khan and al-Hilali's English translation of the Qur'an?
- 2) What are the strategies adopted by Khan and al-Hilali in translating culture-specific lexical items in the Qur'an into English?
- 3) How did Khan and al-Hilali's translation strategies affect the selected culture-specific lexical items in the Qur'an from Brunei Darussalam's perspective?

1.5 Research Significance

It has been acknowledged by many prominent scholars that the Noble Qur'an is truly eminent and incomparable for its beautiful, elegant and rhetorical language as well as for its stylistic features to the degree that some Muslim scholars deemed it inimitable or untranslatable (Al-Jabari, 2008; Halimah, 2014). However, its various translations in various languages that are available within our grasp today, either good or poor in quality, proved that many translators have put forth their greatest possible effort to accomplish the translation task against all odds.

Therefore, it is certain that any study related to the translation of this holy book is absolutely of great importance. In general, it is essentially important to ensure whether its contents and messages, which have been transferred to the target language (TL), remain true to its original text, and to see if the whole meaning of the text is apprehensible and makes sense, and also to find out whether the language and features of the translated version are as appealing as the original.

As the Qur'an is also fully loaded with Arabic and Islamic cultural concepts, the task of translating them to other languages, particularly to English, would definitely be challenging or exhausting to any translator because of the historical, social and regional grounds of these cultural expressions. In addition, the TL culture does not easily accommodate such expressions because of the various differences between Arabic and English (Al-Azzam et al., 2015, p. 33). Even if the translators thought that they had successfully rendered them with the best possible way, the end result of their translation might not be easily

accepted because people from different cultural backgrounds view the world in different ways.

In the light of this matter, it is significantly vital to carry out this research to see how the translators of the divine scripture dealt with these issues in retaining the original and true meaning of the culture-related terms in the target text (TT), besides avoiding – or at least minimizing – the inevitable loss that would occur during the translation process. This would also be a great help and guidance for the practitioners of translation so that they would not likely repeat the same mistakes that the previous translators did in their translations, and most importantly, it would help them to improve and enhance the quality of the Qur'an translation in the future, especially in English for it is the most used language globally.

In particular, this research will be of great benefits to the users or readers of the English translation of the Qur'an in Brunei Darussalam, especially students and those who are interested in learning about the Qur'an in particular or Islam in general, to select a safe and sound translation of the Qur'an, not only from the linguistic and semantic perspectives, but also from the cultural context.

The findings of this study would also contribute to the literature on Qur'anic translation by highlighting that it is simply not sufficient for the translators to be bilingual and bicultural as well as be equipped with the most proper strategies to render the culture-specific lexical items in the Qur'an. It would also require them to have a very deep knowledge of the religion of Islam as well as to imperatively consult Qur'anic exegeses that would sort out any uncertainty and

ambiguity arising from the Qur'anic cultural expressions that ordinary bilingual dictionaries could not clarify.

1.6 Research Scope and Limitation

Specifying the scope of a research is important so that the area to be studied is more focused, precise and clear. It is also aimed at explaining why certain areas, that some readers regard important, are not covered in the particular research (Ahmad Sunawari, 2014, p. 52). On that account, the scope of this research is elaborated in the following points; research area, research subject, and research data.

1.6.1 Research Area

The current research is confined to the translation of the Qur'an in English with the focus on its lexico-cultural parameter and its acceptability from the perspective of the related authoritative government institution in Brunei Darussalam. Therefore, it is noteworthy to mention that this research will not include any discussions or arguments on the grammatical, morphological, rhetorical, or other linguistic issues in Qur'an translation, just as it will not touch on the issue of the acceptability of the lexico-cultural parameter from the viewpoint of the public or specific groups of people.

1.6.2 Research Subject

The primary subject of this research is an English translation of the Qur'an by

Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali. It was first published in Istanbul, Turkey in 1974 but this earlier edition was later removed from circulation. It was replaced by a newer edition in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, which was published by Darussalam. It came in two versions; one in a detailed form which was expanded in nine volumes entitled 'the Noble Qur'an in the English Language with Comments from Tafsir at-Tabari, Tafsir al-Qurtubi and Tafsir Ibn Kathir and Ahadith from Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim and other Ahadith Books', and the other one in a summarized one-volume translation entitled 'Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language: A Summarized Version of at-Tabari, al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir with Comments from Sahih al-Bukhari'. Another edition was later published by King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an with the title 'the Noble Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary' (Jassem, 2014, p. 238).

The edition used as the subject of this research is the summarized one-volume translation which was published in 2003 by Darussalam and comprises 823 pages. It comes with the seal of approval and attestation from Sheikh 'Abdul 'Aziz bin 'Abdullah bin Baz, the President of Islamic Research, Ifta, Call and Propagation Department of Saudi Arabia, as well as from the Islamic University of Madinah where the translators worked while performing the translation process.

The rationale for choosing Khan and al-Hilali's English translation of the Qur'an as the subject of this research is because both the translators, as Sunni Muslims, shared the same religious belief and thoughts of ASWJ with Brunei Darussalam. Hence, this research aimed to examine the lexico-cultural

parameter in Khan and al-Hilali's translation from Brunei's perspective. Apart from that, their translation is also conveniently found either in the mosques, schools, universities or libraries in the country. As a matter of fact, Mohammed (2005) claimed that it is the most widely disseminated translation of the Qur'an in the English-speaking world and distributed for free by the Government of Saudi Arabia, including in Brunei.

1.6.3 Research Data

The data for the research were confined to the CSLIs in Khan and al-Hilali's English translation of the Qur'an. However, the CSLIs in the Qur'an are countless and some of them are mentioned repetitively throughout the discourse, for instance the term 'جَهَنَّمَ' (*Jahannam*) is repeated 77 times, 'الْجَحِيم' (*al-Jahīm*) is mentioned 23 times, 'حَرَّمَ' (*harrama*) occurs 39 times, and 'مُحْسِنِينَ' (*muhsinīn*) appears 33 times.

For this reason, the researcher only selected 150 items from the research subject in order to allow the researcher to thoroughly explore and comprehend the semantic and cultural facets of each item. They were taken from various sections and chapters of the Qur'an in noun or verb forms.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms used in this research are briefly defined below to give a better understanding of the whole topic. This includes terms such as lexico, cultural, and parameter.

1.7.1 Lexico

'Lexico' is derived from the term 'lexis' which originated from the ancient Greek for 'word' and refers to all the words in a language or the entire vocabulary of a language (Barcroft et al., 2011, p. 571). 'Lexico' is used as a prefix to form words pertaining to words or speech.

Lewis (2008, p. 7) explained that there are four different types of lexis. One of them is single word, and the rests are composed of a few words. He defined the first type '**word**' as the most basic type of lexical item but by far the largest of the four types. He added that it is "found listed and explained in even the most unsatisfactory dictionaries. Words, which can stand alone, are lexical items, as are words where a single substitution produces a totally new meaning" (Lewis, 2008, p. 8).

The second type '**collocation**' is "the phenomenon whereby certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency such as 'chase/miss the bus', and 'make/do a mistake'" (Lewis, 2008, p. 8).

Lewis (2008, pp. 8-10) classified the third type '**fixed expressions**' into social greeting, e.g. "good morning", "happy new year", politeness phrase, e.g. "no thank you", "I'm fine", phrase book language, e.g. "can you tell me the way to ..., please?", and idiom, e.g. "you're making a mountain out of a molehill".

Meanwhile, the fourth type '**semi-fixed expressions**' can be categorized into many types and can be found in both spoken and written language such as

follows:

- a) Almost fixed expression which permits minimal variation, e.g.: “It is not my fault”;
- b) Spoken sentences with a simple slot, e.g.: “Could you pass ..., please?”;
- c) Expressions with a slot which must be filled with a particular kind of slot-filler, e.g.: “Hello, nice to see you. I haven’t seen you for/since ...”;
- d) Sentence heads, which can be completed in many ways, e.g.: “What was really interesting/surprising/annoying was ...”; and
- e) More extended frames such as those for a formal letter or the opening paragraph of an academic paper (Lewis, 2008, p. 11).

It is noteworthy to mention that only the first three types of lexis – word, collocation, and fixed expression – were included in the data used in this research.

1.7.2 Cultural

The adjective ‘cultural’ originates from the noun ‘culture’. Taken in its wide ethnographic sense, Tylor (1871, p. 1) defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”.

1.7.3 Parameter

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the term ‘parameter’ originally had a

meaning pertaining to mathematics. It is defined as “an arbitrary constant whose value characterizes a member of a system (as a family of curves)”, or “a quantity (as a mean or variance) that describes a statistical population”, and “an independent variable used to express the coordinates of a variable point and functions of them”.

However, in recent years it is also used in general contexts to refer to “a limit or boundary” as well as “a characteristic, element, or factor”.

The latter is the definition meant to be used for this research, where in this context it refers to the distinguishing characteristic or feature of the cultural lexical items found in the English translation of the Qur'an by Khan and al-Hilali.

1.8 Summary

This chapter generally provided the fundamental introductory information on the research, which began with the elucidation of the research background. It was followed by the problem statements, which clarified the rationale for conducting this research based on the gaps that were discovered from the previous studies. Three objectives, which the researcher aims to achieve in this research, were outlined on the basis of three questions. After that, the scope and limitations of the research were defined, including the key terms used in this research, in order to give a better understanding of the whole topic to its readers. The following chapter will elaborate on the relevant literature on the topic of this research, which will shed more light on the justification for carrying out this research.

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