

The trace of translators' ideology: A case study of English translations of the Qur'an

AMENEH MOHAGHEGH
Faculty of Foreign Languages
University of Isfahan, Iran
mohaghegh.am@gmail.com

HOSSEIN PIRNAJMUDDIN
Faculty of Foreign Languages
University of Isfahan, Iran

ABSTRACT

The present article attempts to explore the effect of translator's ideology on the translated text by focusing on the English translations of two Qura'nic verses from surah Al-Taubah (Repentance) and surah Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) that are most often referred to with the purpose of imaging Islam as the religion of violence and intolerance. Two parts of the article are devoted to definitions of ideology and the relationship between ideology and translation. The last part takes on board the works of four translators with different religions and ideologies who lived in different time periods and are as follows: one Iranian Muslim translator (Tahereh Saffarzade); one English Muslim translator (Mohammad M. Pickthall) and two English Christian translators (Arthur J. Arberry and George Sale). It is argued that Saffarzadeh as a Muslim and the most recent translator among the ones discussed seems to have been more aware of debates on these verses in comparison with others and as a result more careful in rendering them while Sale's translation is the most ideologically-biased one. The result is indicative of the fact that not only the translators' attitude towards Islam but also the social context around them can subtly display itself in the renderings.

Keywords: Ideology; translation; context; Islam; Qur'an

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is the central religious text of Islam and, for Muslims, the book of divine guidance and direction. Its significance stems from the idea that it is the Word of God, revealed to the prophet Mohammad and therefore considered inimitable, as God states in the surah Al-Isra (The Night Journey), verse 88. Moreover, no translation of Qur'an is like the original Arabic text because any attempt at translating the Qur'an is a form of exegesis or is based on an understanding of the text and consequently projects a certain point of view (Mustapha, 1998). In fact for interpretation of the Qur'an every group look at its verses from their own point of view and stick to reasons which others do not believe (Mollanazar & Mohaqeq 2005). As Alvarez and Vidal (1996, p. 5) maintain, "translation creates an image of the original, because translator is under the pressure of a series of constraints (which Lefevere denotes as ideological, poetical and economic), typical of the culture to which s/he belongs". Hence, translation takes place not only between languages but also between cultures, and the information needed by the translator therefore always goes beyond the linguistic. In other words, the translator has an important responsibility as the one who has the power to construct the images of a literature and a culture (Salvador 2000).

Arguably, one of the most misrepresented cultures of the world throughout history has been the Islamic culture with the Qur'an at its heart. The most common charge brought against Islam by many writers and mainstream media is that Islam is intolerant to other

religions and cultures and following September 11, this propaganda against Muslims has been on the increase. By using a portion of the Qur'an as a source and taking some of the verses out of context incorrect presuppositions are made about Islam and Muslims. Because of the significance of these verses in the context of post-9/11 vilification of Islam, two of them were selected and examined with the aim of discovering differences between their translations by translators of different ideological background and contexts.

The verses discussed as case study are from surah Al-Taubah (Repentance), verse 5 and surah Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War), verse 67. Surah Al-Taubah contains verses about fighting (jihad), treating pagans (mushrikeen), hypocrites (munafiqin), and people of the Book and that's why it is used as a source by enemies of Islam to represent it as religion of violence. For example the fifth verse under the focus of this study is the declaration of the abrogation of the treaties with treacherous pagans which is often taken out of context to attack Islam while the command of war is just against those who do not observe the treaties sincerely. Surah Al-Anfal also as its title suggests is about war and it contains verses concerning the loot and treating captives. This surah was revealed after battle of Badr when Muslims could not reach a consensus about the loot gained in the battle and verse 67 deals specifically with the matter of taking captives in the war (Salehi 2005).

Since this research is going to see the effect of ideology on translation, first it surveys definitions of ideology proposed by different scholars and the relationship between ideology and translation. To have a better grasp of the impact of ideology on the translation of the Qur'an, the selected translators are both Muslims and non-Muslims (Christians) from two different cultural and social backgrounds (the East and the West) and who lived in different time periods. Definitely the Eastern Muslims who also live in the recent years are under more pressure and have witnessed much propaganda against Islam in comparison with their western counterparts living before the formation of Islamic extremist groups like Taliban.

Hence, the translators chosen are as follows: Tahereh Saffarzade, an Iranian Muslim (1936-2008) who received her BA in English language and literature in 1960. In 1961 she was employed in the translation section of the Oil Operation Companies as the editor for scientific booklets, but after a few years, because of giving a lecture to the children of laborers in a summer camp, she was compelled to quit the job in Pahlavi regime. She viewed this as leisure time and as an opportunity, and therefore decided to continue her studies abroad. First she went to Britain and then to The United States. Upon acceptance as a member of International Writing Program at Iowa University, she enrolled for the M.F.A, which is essentially designed to enable writers, poets, painters, etc, to teach their respective fields of art, both in practical workshops and theoretical courses, at university level. For her post-graduation degree she studied major contemporary world literature with a special focus on practical literary criticism and translation workshops, which was a new course. On returning home to Iran, she took up work at the translation workshop of the Foreign Languages Department of what was then the National University. After seven years of teaching she was dismissed because of her firm opposition to the regime of the Shah. Afterwards she devoted her second forced period of leisure to the study of the Qur'an and its commentaries both in the Persian and English languages.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, she again began teaching and devoted her life on a fulltime basis for completing translation of the Holy Qur'an into English, which she had started long before. At the Dhaka International Poetry Festival in Bangladesh in 1987, because of her creative contribution to the field of teaching translation, she was elected as one of the five founders of the Asian Committee of Translation. In March 2006 the Afro-Asian Writers' Organization elected her as an exemplary personality. The declaration reads in this regard: "Since Tahereh Saffarzadeh, the distinguished Iranian

poetess and writer, is an excellent example for Muslim women, and in view of her political background as a freedom-seeker during the days of Pahlavi tyranny, coupled with her profound knowledge, this year she has been elected by the Afro-Asian Writers' Organization." (<http://english.irib.ir/>).

The second Muslim translator is Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall (1875-1936), an English Muslim convert who was a writer and translator. Throughout his life for two years he wandered about Palestine and Syria acquiring a thorough knowledge of Arabic and of the religions and customs of the country. In 1907 he revisited the East and travelled in Egypt for several months.

Edward Said in his *Orientalism* puts Pickthall with Pierre Loti and others who through their exotic fiction, offered European readers abstractions 'converting instances of a civilisation into ideal bearers of its values, ideas, and positions which in turn the Orientalists had found in the "Orient" and transferred into common cultural currency' (Said 1979, p. 252, quoted in Shaheen 2004). In 1913 Pickthall spent a few months in Turkey and while impressed by the Ottoman empire, he became so disquieted by the virulent anti-Turkish and anti-Islamic feeling manifested in Europe during the First World War that he began to reassess his religious views which until then had been devoutly Anglican. In 1917 he announced his conversion to Islam and for the rest of his life was a prominent member of the British Muslim community for which he served as acting imam at the London mosque and as editor of the journal *Islamic Review* (Shaheen 2004).

The other two English Christian translators are Arthur John Arberry (1905-1969) and George Sale (in or after 1696-1736). Arberry was an Orientalist born in Portsmouth. As an undergraduate he coincided at Pombroke with the great Islamic scholar E.G. Browne, and it was Browne's friend Ellis Minns, who suggested that Arberry should apply for the newly established Browne studentship in Arabic and Persian. In 1976 he became professor of Arabic and head of the Near and Middle East department and in 1997 he left London to return to his old college at Cambridge as Sir Thomas Adam's professor of Arabic. At Cambridge, Arberry was fond of drawing a comparison between the position of Arabic and Persian studies in the West and that of classical studies at the start of the Renaissance. Arberry's personal contribution here was to be a series of translations from Persian and Arabic namely his translation of the Koran in 1955 (Lyons 2004).

George Sale was an orientalist too. He was son of a London merchant. By profession he was a solicitor but his practice never flourished due to his scholarly activities as an orientalist. In 1720 the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) took the initiative to publish an Arabic translation of the New Testament for the benefit of the Arab Greek Orthodox community of Syria and Palestine. Two Arab Christians were involved in the translation project called Salomon Negri and Carolus Dadichi who, most likely, were the ones giving instruction in the Arabic language to Sale. On 3 November 1726 Sale was elected a corresponding member of the SPCK and took an active part in the society's work through his attendance at the weekly general meetings of its standing committee. Occasionally he assisted in preparing the society's financial accounts and rendered various other services, mostly of a legal nature. In 1734 his translation of Qur'an was published to which he had added a long 'preliminary discourse', a compendium of all that was known about Islam. Yet, Edward Denison Ross and after him G. J. Toomer have shown the extent of Sale's indebtedness to a Latin translation published in Pudia by Ludovico Marracci titled *Refutatio alcorani* ('Refutation of the Koran') (Vrolijk 2004). Although Sale believed that the original design of bringing the pagan Arabs to the knowledge of true God was noble, he remained eager to secure the conversion of the Muslims to protestant Christianity: "The Protestants

alone are able to attack the Koran with success; and for them, I trust, Providence has reserved the glory of its overthrow” (Sale 1891, Preliminary Discourse, p. x).

IDEOLOGY

It was in the late 18th century that the word ideology was coined by Count Antoine Destutt de Tracy, a French rationalist philosopher, to define a “science of ideas” as opposed to metaphysics (Bressler 2007). Since then, this term has always been accompanied by its political connotation, as it is evident in its dictionary definition where it is defined as “a set of ideas that an economic or political system is based on” (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2003). Engels and Marx used the term ideology pejoratively to refer to the ruling ideas, customs and practices of bourgeoisie. In fact, they linked it with the concepts of power relations and domination. They believed that the ruling class, consciously or unconsciously forces its ideology on the working class (Bressler 2007). Eagleton (1996), as the most influential contemporary Marxist critic, considers literature as a product of an ideology which is itself a result of the actual social interactions occurring between people in definite times and locations.

A rather different take on ideology is to be found in contemporary sociology where ideologies are identified, by a theorist such as Mannheim, as ‘styles of thought’ and divided into “‘particular’ ideologies (the self-interests of specific groups, such as the ‘ideology of a small businessman’) and ‘total’ ideologies (weltanschauungen or complete commitments to a way of life)” (Bell 2000, p. 414). A more recent theorisation of ideology quoted in the same source is that of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz who sees it “in more neutral terms as one kind of symbol system among other cultural symbol systems such as the religious, the aesthetic, or the scientific” (p. 414).

Yet, scholars in the field of language-related, cultural and translation studies often tend to extend the concept of ideology beyond political sphere and define it in a rather politically neutralised sense. Calzada Perez (2003, p. 5) defines ideology as “a set of ideas, which organise our lives and help us understand the relation to our environment”. In one of his articles, *Discourse, Ideology and Context*, Van Dijk (2001, p. 16) maintains that “ideologies are general and abstract. They are about general principles of the group, basic convictions, and axiomatic beliefs”. He defines ideologies “as a special form of social cognition shared by social group” and adds that ideologies form “the basis of the social representations and practices of group members, including their discourse, which at the same time serves as the means of ideological production, reproduction and challenge” (p. 12).

Ideology in the words of Hatim and Mason (1997, p. 144) is “the tacit assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups” and they agree with Van Dijk (2001) that the term ‘discourse’ is closely associated with it. Mason (1992) in his article *Discourse, Ideology and Translation* proposes a similar definition and contends that ideologies are the set of beliefs and values which affect an individual's or institution's view of the world and help them in interpreting the events.

Recently, Munday (2008, p. 8) has defined ideology in a “wider semiotic sense to mean a system of beliefs that informs the individual's worldview that is then realized linguistically”. He also adds, “This is a current that can be traced from Bakhtin to Halliday to critical discourse analysis and to semioticians such as Van Dijk”.

In this article, the researchers take into account the definition of ideology by Munday (2008) which is also similar to Hatim and Mason (1997) in which ideology refers to the

beliefs and value systems shared by social groups which can affect their world view and can be realised linguistically too, whether by a writer or a translator as the one who rewrites.

IDEOLOGY AND TRANSLATION

According to Tymoczko (2006) in Western culture translation has been conceived of as a process of intercultural transference traditionally. It has been a communicative process in which material is transmitted from one language to another. This conceptualisation is hidden in the English word ‘translation’, which comes from Latin roots meaning ‘to carry across’ (Tymoczko 2006). However, As Tymoczko mentions, other cultures have seen translation in very different ways from intercultural transfer. These perspectives are signaled by the words used for the process of translation in different languages. She gives the example of Arabic language in which the word for translation is ‘tarjama’ with the original meaning of ‘biography’. The association of this word with the narrative genre of biography indicates that the role of the translator is related to that of a narrator; therefore “the powerful potential of the translator’s agency as one who ‘tells’ and hence frames the material ‘told’ is suggested” (Tymoczko p. 449).

Although even in some of the earliest examples of translation, an ideological approach to translation can be found (Fawcett 1998), According to Tymoczko (2006) it was the World War the Second that challenged the Western culture’s traditional view on translation and introduced new complexities and diverse perspectives from many parts of the world. She (p. 444-45) contends that:

These expansions in the field have traced a trajectory away from technical questions about how to translate per se toward larger ethical perspectives on translating as an activity, the role of translation products in cultures, and the nature and function of specific translations. Implicit in many of these discourses are questions of ideology, including the constructivist aspects of translation, the role of representation, and the transculturation of cultural forms and values.

In fact, in the past 20 years, there has been a growing trend in translation studies to follow a deconstructionist philosophy and give translators authorship of their work (Modrea 2004). Translation in this sense is no longer a target language equivalence of an original text by an author, but rather a creative process of rewriting. In this regard, translators have the possibility of showing their own voices in the translation. Actually, under the influence of poststructuralism and functionalism, the focus of attention has been shifted to the issues of translator’s agency and subjectivity. According to Venuti (1992), poststructuralism initiated a radical reconsideration of the traditional topoi of translation theory in which a translation emerges as an active reconstitution of the foreign text mediated by the irreducible linguistic, discursive, and ideological differences of the target-language culture. He also adds that, “poststructuralist thinkers like Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man explode the binary opposition between ‘original’ and ‘translation’ which underwrites the translator’s invisibility today” (p. 6).

As Munday (2001) points out, Bassnett and Lefevere were among those who went beyond language and focused on the interaction between translation and culture. Lefevere (1992a, p. 14) mentions that “translations are not made in a vacuum”, and adds that the way translators understand their culture and themselves may influence their translations. Alvarez and Vidal (1996) argue that behind every one of the translator’s selections, as what to add,

what to leave out, which words to choose and how to place them, there is a voluntary act that reveals his history and the socio-political milieu that surrounds him and his culture.

Schaffner (1996, p. 3 as cited in Zequan 2003) confirms the above claim by stating that, “It has been stressed that ideologies find their clearest expression in language and at different levels”, these levels can range from the lexical-semantic level to the grammatical-syntactic one. For instance, the English translations of Bible during the 20th century is a case of penetration of political and cultural presuppositions in the text. As Bailey (2005) mentions the 20th century was a time of unprecedented violence directly responsible for the loss of many millions of human lives, yet during this very same time period almost every major English translation of the Bible changed the wording of the sixth commandment from ‘You shall not Kill’ to a lesser binding phrase, ‘You shall not murder’. In fact, as it is pointed out there, the English word ‘murder’ is too limited and too varied a legal term to function adequately as the translation for the Hebrew word ‘rsh’. Moreover, the word murder is too rare a crime to merit the status of the Ten Commandments. Bailey sees this change in the translations as granting biblical permission to continue the violence and considers the change as the result of the shift in social and cultural norms that began in the 1960s and continued on through the 1990s. At that time, many of the denominations, especially the mainline ones, had established strong ties with the government, education and the military. Judaism also followed this change of translations, influenced largely by the creation of the state of Israel and the experience of politics and power that have accompanied it (Bailey).

According to Lefevere (1992b), this is the same process of ‘rewriting’ that is at work in translation. He sees translation as “the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting” and as “the most influential because it is able to project the image of an author or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin” (p. 9). He also holds that on every level of the translation process, if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological nature, the latter wins out.

For Jacquemond (1992) translation is not just the intellectual, creative process by which a text written in a given language is transferred into another. Rather like any human activity, it takes place in a specific social and historical context that informs and structures it, just as it informs other creative processes. Jacquemond discusses the hegemony of western discourse over the Arab world's discourse, which ensures the prevalence of dominant western representations of Arab culture. He then illustrates his point with two examples from the best-seller lists in France over the past few years. The first one is, Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter*, the best-selling book in 1990 (1,910,000 copies). It is, allegedly, the testimony of an American woman who, after marrying an Iranian, followed him to post revolutionary Iran only to realize that she could not cope with such a drastic cultural change, whereupon she was forced to fight a painful battle to be permitted to leave the country with her daughter. The second example is Gilles Perrault's *Notre Ami le Roi* (about 300,000 copies in 6 months), a violent attack on Hassan the second, king of Morocco, focusing on his poor record as regards human rights. Jacquemond maintains that there is a relation between these remarkable successes and the kind of representation of the Orient that they confirm and hence reinforce. In both cases, the 'barbarian and despotic' Orient is witnessed: the despotism of the man as husband and the head of the household in Mahmoody's book, the despotism of the ruler over his subjects in Perrault's book.

Indeed, the same thing can happen when a translator under the ideological and political constraints ‘rewrites’ the original text in order to represent a culture or ideology, for example the Islamic one, in a certain way. That original text can be the main text of religion of Islam, Qur'an, which like other religious texts is inevitably a source of ideology and at the same time a source for reproduction of ideology. However, Qur'an's translation becomes a

more sensitive task since as Sale (1824) contends it plays a far greater role among the Muslims than does the Bible in Christianity. The reason is that it provides not only the canon of the faith, but also the textbook of ritual and the principles of a civil law.

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF QUR'AN

As Islam was not meant only for the Arabs, the need for translating the Qur'an as its main text to other languages is evident. Actually, if the fact that Prophet's mission was universal is accepted, the only possible way of conveying the message of Islam is through translation.

According to Vrolijk (2004), the first English translation of the Qur'an was the work of Alexander Ross (1649) based on a French version (1647) by Andre du Ryer. The second English version of Qur'an is by George Sale in 1734 which was reprinted in 1749, 1764, and many times afterwards, most recently in 1984. Undoubtedly, Sale's translation is based on the Arabic text, for the interpretation of which he regularly drew on the commentary by al-Baydawi (Bobzin 2003), but he continuously looked at Marracci's interpretation of the text and used Marracci's work which was a Latin translation with the purpose of refutation of the Qur'an as its title suggests (Vrolijk 2004 & Bobzin 2003).

In 1861, a new English translation of the Qur'an by the clergyman John Meadows Rodwell who was an old friend of Darwin's, appeared. It is unusual in that, for the first time in a translation of the Qur'an, the surahs were arranged by taking into consideration their chronological order. Rodwell followed his own ideas about arrangement, compiling the older suras according to thematic considerations rather than historical allusion (Bobzin 2003). Margoliouth who revised this translation in 1909, characterised it in his introduction as "one of the best that have as yet been produced. It seems to a great extent to carry with it the atmosphere in which Mohammed lived, and its sentences are imbued with the flavor of the east" (cited in Bobzin 2003).

In 1930, Marmaduke Pickthall published a translation titled *The meaning of the glorious Koran*, which, as he contends in his introduction, is a literal rendering of the original while the result is not the Glorious Qur'an but only an attempt to present its meaning in English (Pickthall 1953). Pickthall first endorsed the position of Muslim scholars that the Qur'an was untranslatable but maintained that the general meaning of the text could still be conveyed to English speakers. Aware that heavily annotated works detracted from focus on the actual text, Pickthall provided few explanatory notes and tried to let the text speak for itself. While Pickthall's work was popular in the first half of the twentieth century and, therefore, historically important, its current demand is limited by its archaic prose and lack of annotation. (Mohammed 2005).

Among the numerous English translations, that by the Cambridge Arabist Arthur John Arberry in 1955 holds a special place. The very title, *The Koran Interpreted*, hints that Arberry follows the concept, first emphasised in the English speaking world by Pickthall (Bobzin 2003), that the Qur'an is actually untranslatable. Arberry also intends to imitate, however imperfectly, those rhetorical and rhythmical patterns which are the glory and the sublimity of the Koran.

Besides the above mentioned translations which are among the well known ones, there are a number of English translations by translators whose native language is not English. One of the most recent one of them is Tahereh Saffarzadeh from Iran whose English and Persian translations were published in 2001. As she maintains in her introduction to her translation she made no attempt to reproduce the Arabic rhetorical patterns of the Qur'an in English or Persian. However, she inserted the gist of her knowledge and information related

to each verse smoothly in her translation or through words within brackets (Saffarzadeh 2002).

CASE STUDY

There is a consensus among the translation scholars that no text is fully translatable into another language, let alone the text of Qur'an which is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both (Arberry 2005) the very sound of which move men to tears and ecstasy (Pickthall 1953). As the influential Egyptian litterateur Taha Husayn (1930, cited in Bullata 2000, p. ix) says:

But you know that the Qur'an is not prose and it is not verse either. It is rather Qur'an, and it can not be called by any other name but this...It is "a Book whose verses have been perfected then expanded, from One who is Wise, All-Aware"...It has been one of a kind, and nothing like it has ever preceded or followed it.

The most important feature of the Qur'an, aside from its literary excellence, is its divine guidance as it is a scripture meant for human enlightenment concerning the most urgent and vital questions of deep concern to every human being. It is unique among the revealed scriptures not only because it is the latest and the last, and therefore, the most up-to-date of them, but also because it is the only one preserved in the original form that it was revealed to its prophet. Thus, it serves as the ultimate criterion and standard against which the contents of all other religious literature are to be evaluated and judged.

In the present research also the focus is on the transference of the content of this scripture regarding warfare in two verses rendered into English by four translators with different ideological backgrounds. The first verse is one of the Ayat Al-Qital (the verses of fighting) and the second is also related to war.

It was on February 23, 1998 that *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, an Arabic newspaper published in London, printed the full text of a *Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders* (CNS News 2011). The first part of this declaration is cited here:

Praise be to God, who revealed the Book, controls the clouds, defeats factionalism, and says in His Book, 'But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war)' [surah Al-Taubah, verse 5].

Then the following fatwa was issued to all Muslims: "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies -civilians and military- is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country...". It is then claimed in the declaration that this fatwa is in compliance with God's order (CNS News).

As the afore-mentioned verse is always referred to either by anti-Muslims to vilify Islam as the religion of violence or by some terrorists to justify their extremism, the researchers decided to go through its English translations and discover the differences between them to see how linguistically the translators' ideologies become visible; In fact the focus will be both on the translated text and the use of lexical items plus the texts brought outside the main target text including parenthetical statements and footnotes. What follows is the complete version of verse five of surah Al-Taubah in Arabic and its four English renderings presented based on the alphabetical order of translators' last name:

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصِرُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Arberry (first published in 1955/ the version used published in 2005):

Then, when the sacred months (Rajab, Zil-Qada, Zil-Hejja and Muharram) are drawn away, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush But if they repent, and perform the prayer, and pay the alms, then let them go their way. God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate

Pickthall (1930/1953):

Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Saffarzadeh (2001/2002):

So when the Sacred Months are passed, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and seize them and besiege them and wait for them to capture them in every corner, but if they repent and establish prayer and pay alms to the poor, then leave them free in their affairs, verily, Allah is the Merciful Forgiving.

Sale (1734/ 1824):

And when the months (where in ye are not allowed to attack them) shall be past, kill the idolaters wheresoever ye shall find them, and take them (prisoners), and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient place. But if they shall repent, and observe the appointed times of prayers, and pay the legal alms, dismiss them freely; for GOD (is) gracious (and) merciful.

The first translator under the focus is Arberry. Generally, in his translation few notes are used and in the case of this specific surah also there is not enough explanation for absence of the phrase ‘In the name of God, the most merciful the most compassionate’ which comes at the beginning of all of the surahs but surah Al-Taubah. The only note for that matter is: “PM [Prophet Mohammad] ordered Imam Ali to recite these verses before the idolaters without Bismillah [in the name of God]” (Arberry 2005, p. 245). Moreover, no reason is given for killing of idolaters in the form of notes. Of course, it is evident from the previous verse that the killing of all the idolaters is not ordered and those of them with whom the Prophet made covenant and they did not support his enemies, were secure. As a matter of fact this very verse is the one that is pointed out by Islam's enemies to malign Islamic teachings and in the case of the *Declaration of World Islamic Front for Jihad* even the second part of the verse which refers to the case of freeing the idolaters who repented, is omitted.

Unlike Arberry's, Sale's translation is replete with notes. Some of these notes are from commentators like Al Beidawi, Al Zamaksh, Jallaloddin, etc., and some of them are added by Sale which, are not altogether against Islamic teachings. For example, Sale (1824, p. 178)

points out that the reason for the absence of Bismillah (in the name of God) at the beginning of this chapter is that: “these words imply a concession of security, which is utterly taken away by this chapter, after a fixed time”. Furthermore, as a note on the first verse which is completely related to the whole chapter, Sale mentions that the reason for renouncing all leagues is the great power to which the Prophet had arrived. He then continues that: “But the Pretext he (the prophet) made use of was the treachery he had met with among the Jewish and idolatrous Arabs...”(p. 178). Interestingly, here the trace of Sale's ideology becomes visible when he uses the word ‘pretext’. According to *Oxford Advanced Dictionary*, a pretext is “a false reason that you give for doing something, usually something bad, in order to hide the real reason”. In fact, Sale very subtly implies that the Prophet of Islam wants to break his promise without any right reason. However, according to Makarem Shirazi (1978), the league is renounced with those idolaters who have shown in some cases that they are prone to break their promise and rebel.

To find the roots of this biased translation, one can refer to the 1891 version of Sale’s translation of Qur’an where he explicitly claims that Islam, unlike Christianity and Judaism, is not a heavenly religion. He states that:

He (Mohammed) has given a new system of religion, which has had still greater success than the arms of his followers, and to establish this religion made use of an imposture; and on this account it is supposed that he must of necessity have been a most abandoned villain, and his memory is become infamous. But as Mohammed gave his Arabs the best religion he could, as well as the best laws, preferable. at least, to those of the ancient pagan lawgivers, I confess I cannot see why he deserves not equal respect—though not with Moses or Jesus Christ, whose laws came really from Heaven, yet, with Minos or Numa, notwithstanding the distinction of a learned writer, who seems to think it a greater crime to make use of an imposture to set up a *new* religion, founded on the acknowledgment of one true God, and to destroy idolatry, than to use the same means to gain reception to rules and regulations for the more orderly practice of heathenism already established.

Furthermore, Davenport in his *A Sketch Of the Life Of George Sale* in the same version of Sale’s *The Koran*, in response to the fact that he was accused of being a secret believer in the faith of Islam (Kunitz & Haycraft 1952), assures the readers that Sale never placed Islamism on an equality with Christianity.

On the other hand, Saffarzadeh as a Muslim translator who witnessed distortion of Islam by terrorist groups who take Qur’anic verses out of context, tries to prevent any wrong interpretation. She adds the following note when translating this verse: “By idolaters here is meant, those idolatrous tribes of Arabia who has first made agreements with the Muslims and then violated them”(2002, p. 426). Actually, by using such a note, Saffarzadeh wants to make sure that no reader, especially non-Muslim ones, misunderstands the verse as a command to make a wide slaughter of all the idolaters. Being released in the same year as 9/11 deadly attacks happened, her translation could not be unaffected by propaganda prior to those events.

The other Muslim translator examined in this study is Pickthall, a British Muslim convert who saw Islam as radical freedom from the encroachments of the state as much as from the claws of the ego (Murad, no date). However, because of living in a different era from Saffarzadeh’s time, except a part at the beginning of each surah to elaborate on the name of it and its main subjects, he provides no explanatory note.

The next verse that is discussed is verse 67 of surah Al-Anfal:

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يُكُونَ لَهُ أُسْرَى حَتَّى يُثَخَّنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

Arberry (1955/ 2005):

It is not for any Prophet to have prisoners until he make wide slaughter in the land, you desire the chance goods of the present world, and God desires the world to come and God is All-mighty, All-wise

Pickthall (1930/1953):

It is not for any prophet to have captives until he hath made slaughter in the land. Ye desire the lure of this world and Allah desireth (for you) the Hereafter, and Allah is Mighty, Wise.

Saffarzadeh (2001/2002):

It is not meet for a messenger that he should have the prisoners of war (and free them with ransom), unless he has defeated the disbelievers in the battlefield (and has triumphed in the land); you desire the temporal profit of this world, but Allah wills (for you) the Hereafter; and Allah is the invincible Mighty Decreeer.

Sale (1734/1824):

It hath not been (granted) unto any prophet, that he should possess captives, until he had made a great slaughter (of the infidels) in the earth. Ye seek the accidental (goods) of this world, but GOD regardeth the life to come; and GOD is mighty (and) wise.

According to Salehi Najafabadi (2005), what is usually understood from this verse by some commentators is that all prophets, after fighting their enemies and defeating them, never took any captives but slaughtered the rest of defeated army so that their religions become established in the land. Commenting on the verse in this way makes the previous prophets seem atrocious and cruel and this type of interpretation is only in accordance with a fabricated history of the holy prophets. Salehi Najafabadi (2005) continues that the correct sense of the verse is that no prophet is expected to spend the time taking captives and keeping them while his army is still involved in fighting. The reason is that all the force and attention should be focused on defeating the enemy in order to increase the chance of victory while having prisoners and taking ransom from them to set them free later may distract the army and hinder them from their main goal. To put it in a nutshell, taking captives and receiving tribute from them are not per se prohibited but if the army is in the middle of the fight it should not get distracted by these actions till the complete suppression of the rebellious groups (Makarem Shirazi 1978 & Salehi Najafabadi 2005). Additionally, freeing the prisoners in return of getting tribute is what God explicitly orders in surah Mohammad, where in the verse 4 he states that: ... فَأَمَّا مَنَّا بَعْدُ وَإِنَّمَا فِدَا ... (...then set them free, either by grace or ransom...).

To further clarify the point, Salehi Najafabadi's translation (2005, p. 123) is presented here:

It is not expected from any prophet as a commander to use the military force in order to take captives. All the force should be applied to put down the enemy; you want to take prisoners while involved in fighting in order to receive ransom in return of their freedom and this is the temporal goods of this world which you seek. Yet, Allah wants you to seek the Hereafter and to put down God's enemies; God is mighty and wise.

Interestingly, this verse is referred to by Sale in a footnote under the translation of verse 12 of the same surah where the believers are encouraged to fight bravely against the disbelievers who have rebelled:

قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرَّعْبَ فَاصْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَأَلْتَنِي فِي إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَيَّ
وَاصْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ

When thy lord was revealing to the angles, I am with you; so confirm the believers I shall cast into the unbelievers' hearts terror; so smite above the necks, and smite every finger (tip) of them! (Arberry's translation).

In that note, Sale (1824, p. 169) mentions that "This is the punishment expressly assigned the enemies of the Mohammadan religion; though the Muslims did not inflict it on the prisoners they took at Badr, for which they are reprehended in this chapter". Once more in this footnote Sale's attitude toward Islam becomes evident as he wrongly generalizes this punishment to all enemies of the prophet, even the prisoners they took, while the targets of this verse are the rebellious groups of disbelievers. Actually, nowhere in this surah the Muslims are ordered to smite the captive's necks and fingers and nowhere they are reprehended for not doing so.

Concerning translations, it is obvious that not only Sale but also Arberry and Pickthall misunderstood and consequently mistranslated the phrase *حَتَّى يُنْخَنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ*. However, the level of intensification in Pickthall rendering is less than Sale and Arberry as he did not use the adverbs "great" and "wide" brought by them respectively.

In contrast to the above-mentioned translators, Saffarzadeh's rendering of this controversial Arabic phrase is the closest one to the original because instead of bringing "making a (wide/great) slaughter", unlike other translators she writes "defeating the disbelievers". As Salehi Najafabadi contends the gerund (masdar) of *يُنْخَنَ* is the word *انْخَانَ* originally denoting "to stop something from moving", and in this verse putting down the opposition of enemies is intended not necessarily massacring them. Another point worth mentioning is that the verb *يُنْخَنَ* is a transitive one and its object that is the word "enemy" is hidden in it as it could be *حَتَّى يُنْخَنَ الْعَدُوَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ*; however, some previous commentators rendered it as an intransitive verb of "getting established in the land". As it is observed, Saffarzadeh both gets the subtle point of transitivity of this verb and also tries to refer to the original sense of the verb in order to reduce the seeming violence of the verse.

CONCLUSION

In our world of cultural diversity, in which it is vital to understand the other, translation as a means of communication becomes a crucial matter. The reaction to and reception of other cultures are conditioned by the images we have of them; by the translations which already exist and to which the target culture is historically accustomed.

Lefevre (1992a) considers the Islamic culture, of low prestige in Europe and America and contends that is why some of the translators take what liberty they want in translating Islamic literature. In the task of translation of Qur'an, a translator like Sale as one who had no intention of granting Islam any authenticity as a religion (Kalin 2004), did not omit any word of the source text, but took liberty with the text in his footnotes (as the case of verse 12 of surah Al-Anfal and verse 5 of surah Al-Taubah). As Genette (1997, as cited in Munday 2008) maintains, paratexts, the material outside of the text such as a critical introduction, evaluative footnotes, book cover, and the like are the points at which the translator's voice becomes loudest. Actually, in Sale's translation there are copious footnotes, "reaching up like skyscrapers to the top of this or that page", to use Nabakov's simile who desired such a translation (1955, as cited in Hatim and Munday 2004 p. 96). But some of them are spiteful leading to production of unfair and rough material for Christian missionaries as Sale was a member of the society for the promoting of Christian knowledge (Davenport, as cited in 1891 version of Sale's translation).

Pace Sale, Arberry and Pickthall rarely used footnotes which may cause readers to have many questions and misinterpretations as Qur'an is a text with subtle points and cryptic references. However, in contrast to Sale whose presumed partiality to Islam earned him the criticism of his contemporaries (Vrolijk 2004), these two scholars had no negative attitude toward Islam and except the mistranslation of verse 67 which is seen even in the commentaries by Muslims, nothing biased was detected in their parenthetical statements or footnotes. Actually Pickthall as an English Muslim convert who, throughout his life, saw Islam as radical freedom from the encroachments of the state and the claws of the ego (Murad no date), and Arberry also as an orientalist who was fond of comparing the position of Arabic and Persian studies in the West and that of classical studies at the start of the Renaissance (Lyons 2004), presented the message of Islam in the light it deserved.

Finally, Saffarzadeh as a Muslim and the most recent translator among others discussed here, has been more aware of the debates on these verses and as a result more careful in rendering them. Being released in the same year as 9/11 attacks occurred, her translation could not be free of her concerns about the vilification of Islam. As it was observed, her diction and footnotes aimed at assuring the non-Muslim readers that Islam is not the religion of violence.

REFERENCES

- Alvarez, R. & Vidal, M.C. (1996). *Translation, Power, Subversion*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Arberry, J.A. (1955/2005). *Holy Qur'an*. Qum: Ansariyan.
- Bailey, W. A. (2005). *"You Shall Not Kill" or "You Shall Not Murder"? The Assault on a Biblical Text*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.
- Bassnet, S. & Lefevre, A. (1995). *Translation, History and Culture*. London: Cassell.
- Bell, D. (2000). Ideology. In Alan Bullock & Stephan Trombley (Eds.), *The new fontana dictionary of modern thought* (pp. 414-415). London: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Bobzin, H. (2003). Translations of the Qur'an. In J. D. McAuliffe (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of The Qur'an* (pp.340-354). Leiden: Brill.
- Boullata, J. Issa. (2000). *Literary structures of religious meaning in the Quran*. Richmond: Curzon Press.
- Bressler, E. (2007). *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Calzada-Pérez, M. (2003). Introduction. In Maria Calzada-Pérez (Ed.). *Apropos of ideology: Translation studies on ideology-ideologies in translation studies* (pp. 1-22). Manchester: St. Jerome.
- CNSNews.com Staff. (2011). Bin Laden's murderous 1998 'fatwa': 'Comply with God's order to kill the Americans' Retrieved April 6, 2012 from <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/bin-ladens-murderous-1998-fatwa-comply-gods-order-kill-americans>
- Dora Sales Slavador. (2006). Documentation as ethics in postcolonial translation. *Translation Journal*. Vol.10(1), Retrieved April 12, 2011 from <http://accurapid.com/journal/35documentation.htm>

- Eagleton, T. (1996). *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Fawcett, P. (1998). Ideology and translation. In Mona Baker (Ed.). *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (pp. 106-111). London: Routledge.
- Hatim, B. & Mason, I. (1997). *The Translator as Communicator*. London: Routledge.
- Hatim, B. & Munday, J. (2004). *Translation: An Advanced Resource Book*. New York: Routledge.
- Jacquemond, R. (1992). Translation and cultural hegemony: the case of French-Arabic translation. In Lawrence Venuti (Ed.). *Rethinking translation: discourse, subjectivity, ideology*. (pp. 139-158). London: Routledge.
- Kalin, I. (2004). Roots of misconception: Euro-American perceptions of Islam before and after September 11. In Joseph E. B. Lumbard (Ed.). *Islam, fundamentalism, and the betrayal of tradition, revised: Essays by Western Muslim scholars*. (pp. 143-187). Bloomington: World Wisdom Inc.
- Kunitz, S.Y. & Haycraft, H. (1952). *British Authors Before 1800: A Biographical Dictionary*. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company.
- Lefevere, A. (1992a). *Translation, History, Culture: A Sourcebook*. London: Routledge.
- Lefevere, A. (1992b). *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London: Routledge.
- Liu Zequan. (2003). Register analysis as a tool for translation quality assessment. *Translation Journal*. Vol 7(3), Retrieved October 14, 2011 from <http://www.bokorlang.com/journal/25register.htm>
- Lyons, M. C. (2004). "Arberry, Arthur John (1905-1969)". In H. C. G. Matthew & Brian Harrison (Eds). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. (pp. 314-316). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Makarem Shirazi, N. (1978). *Nemooneh Commentary*. Tehran: Darolkotob Islamiah.
- Maria Tymoczko. (2006). Translation: ethics, ideology, action. *The Massachusetts Review*. Vol. 47(3), 442-463. Retrieved May 2, 2011 from <http://proquest.umi.com/login>
- Mason, I. (1992). Discourse, ideology and translation. In Robert de Beaugrande, Abdullah Shunnaq & Mohammed H. Heliel (Eds.). *Language, discourse and translation: In the West and Middle East*. (23-34). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company.
- Modrea, A. (2004). Ideology, subversion and the translator's voice: A comparative analysis of the French and English translations of guillermo cobrera infante's tres tristes tiggres. MA thesis, University of Ottawa, Canada.
- Mohammed, Kh. (2005). Assessing English Translations of the Qur'an. *Middle East Quarterly*. Vol. 11(2), 58-71. Retrieved February 20, 2013 from <http://www.meforum.org/717/assessing-english-translations-of-the-quran>
- Mollanazar, Hossein & Mohammad Mohaqeq (2005). The holy Qur'an: Translation and ideological presuppositions. *Translation Studies Quarterly*. Vo.3. No. 11, 59-67.
- Munday, J. (2001). *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. London: Routledge.
- Munday, J. (2008). *Style and Ideology: Latin American Writing in English*. London: Routledge.
- Murad, Aabdu Hakim (no date). Marmaduke Pickthall: A brief biography. *British Muslim Heritage*. Retrieved January 12, 2012 from http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/bmh/BMM-AHM-pickthall_bio.htm
- Mustapha, H. (1998). Qur'an (Koran) translation. In Mona Baker (Ed.). *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*. (pp. 200-205). London: Routledge.
- Pickthall, M. M. (1930/1953). *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*. New York: New American Library.
- Saffarzadeh, T. (2001/2002). *The Holy Qur'an*. Tehran: Sooreh-Mehr-Publishing Corporation.
- Sale, G. (1734/1824). *The Koran*. London: Frederick Warne.
- Sale, G. (1891) *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed: Translated into English from the Original Arabic, with Explanatory Notes, Taken from the Most Approved Commentators, to Which Is Prefixed a Preliminary Discourse* (Electronic version). London: Frederick Warne. Retrieved December 4, 2011 from www.arthursclassicnovels.com/koran/quran-sale.doc
- Salehi Najafabadi, N. (2005). *Hadishaye Khiali dar Majma'olbayan* be Hamrahe Chahar Maghakeye Tafseeri (*Imaginary Sayings in Majma'olbayan with Four Commentary Essays*). Tehran: Kavir.
- Shaheen, M. (2004). "Pickthall, Marmaduke William (1875-1936)". In H.C.G. Matthew & Brian Harrison (Eds). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. (pp. 231-232). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tributes to Dr. Tahereh Saffarzadeh. Retrieved March 4, 2013 from <http://english.irib.ir/programs/iran/item/54473-tributes-to-dr-tahereh-saffarzadeh>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Discourse, ideology and context. *Folia Linguistica*. 11-40. Retrieved March 10, 2010 from <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Discourse,%20ideology%20and%20context>
- Venuti, L. (1992). *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. London: Routledge.
- Vrolijk, A. (2004). "Sale, George (b. in or after 1696, d. 1736)". In H.C.G. Matthew & Brian Harrison (Eds). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. (pp. 685-687). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wehmeier, S. (Ed.). (2003). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (7th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.