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COHERENCE IN HOLY QUR'AN TRANSLATION

DE LA COHERENCE DANS LA TRADUCTION DU SAINT CORAN

Auteur (s) : **Hicham BEDDARI et Leila El Ghazouani**

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COHERENCE IN HOLY QUR'AN TRANSLATION

DE LA COHERENCE DANS LA TRADUCTION DU SAINT CORAN

Hicham Beddari

Faculty of Human Sciences, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

Beddari20@gmail.com

& Laila El Ghazouani

Knowledge Integration and Translation Laboratory, Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco

Elghazouani.laila@gmail.com

Abstract

The inimitable nature of the words of Allah, which were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SWS (peace be upon him) in a well-crafted fashion, and which miraculously silenced the most eloquent orators and distinguished poets since it came into existence, represents the driving factor, both intrinsic and extrinsic, which brought this study into being.

Coherence, being the researchers' area of interest and investigation, is believed to be a key standard of textuality that determines the organic unity of a given text. However, any incongruity can obviously result in a dramatic loss of the meaning conveyed by the original message. The translators in focus, namely Yusef Ali and Muhammad Asad, seem to be challenged by a various linguistic and terminological difficulties that hinder the establishment of a coherent text.

Hence, researchers believe that there is a compelling need to investigate and scrutinize the main impediments to coherence.

Keywords: Holy Qur'an, Coherence, reader-focused coherence shifts, standard of textuality, continuity of senses, concept and relations, act of worship.

Résumé

La nature inimitable des paroles d'Allah, qui ont été révélées au Prophète Mohammed (PSL) d'une manière bien conçue, et qui ont miraculeusement réduit au silence les orateurs les plus éloquents et les poètes les plus distingués depuis qu'elles existent, représente le facteur moteur, à la fois intrinsèque et extrinsèque, qui a donné naissance à cette étude.

La cohérence, qui est le domaine d'intérêt et d'investigation des chercheurs, est considérée comme une norme clé de la textualité qui détermine l'unité organique d'un texte donné. Cependant, toute incongruité peut évidemment entraîner une déperdition considérable du sens véhiculé par le message original. Les traducteurs en question, à savoir Yusef Ali et Muhammad Asad, semblent être confrontés à diverses difficultés linguistiques et terminologiques qui entravent l'établissement d'un texte cohérent. Les chercheurs estiment donc qu'il est impératif d'étudier et d'examiner les principaux obstacles à la cohérence.

Mots-clés : Saint Coran, cohérence, changements de cohérence axés sur le lecteur, norme de textualité, continuité des sens, concept et relations, acte d'adoration.

Introduction

Translation, since its inception, has always played a significant role in exchanging the vast treasures of knowledge, and incentivizing a wide range of countries to revolutionize vital scientific, economic and cultural sectors pushing them forward to change and progress by leaps and bounds. The translation of the Holy Qur'an, more particularly, has kindled burning interest amongst Arab and western translators and scholars. Endeavours of the latter have yielded a huge amount of translations largely questioned and debated by researchers, hence the attentiveness and enthusiasm towards the translation of sacred texts. Researchers are keen on exploring and scrutinizing translation of a given text in its entirety rather than approaching language from a sentential perspective. This study is accomplished by delving into one of the most fundamental criteria of textuality, namely coherence, and looking at it from a pointed perspective, namely reader-focused coherence shifts or world-knowledge correlate, to say it differently.

According to Blum-Kulka, reader focused coherence shifts transpire "as a result of a text being read by culturally different audiences"¹. She ascertains that this kind of shift is ascribed to the glaring cultural disparity between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). Because of this cultural gap in terms of values, beliefs and the like, a void is created in the translation. Given these facts, "the translator's task is to fill any cultural voids that may impede the TT readers' interpretability of the TT; failure to do so may result in ineffective translation."²

The present study aims to investigate the establishment or maintainability of the aforementioned standard of textuality (coherence) in the English translated target text. The word taken from the Holy Qur'an, which has been meticulously selected for description and analysis in terms of coherence is '**Zakāt**' as an act of worship. To proceed, the present research builds upon two different texts translated by Muslim translators. Needless to say, two scholars who excel in the realm of Qur'an exegesis have been sought in the present study to support and strengthen the presented assumptions and thoughts the researchers feel firmly convinced with.

The primary aims of the current study are:

- To explore areas where the two translators in question are challenged when dealing with issues pertaining to the concept of coherence.
- To explore the strategies, if any, contrived by the translators to make up for any potential loss of the intended meaning.
- To investigate to what extent the translations preserve the established texture contained in the original text compared to the translated target text using a multidisciplinary approach.

¹ Shoshana. B.K. (1986). "Shifts in Cohesion and Coherence in Translation." *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication*. (Eds.). Juliane House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka. Tiibingen: Verlag Gunter Narr. P.305.

² Farghal. M & Bloushi. N. (2012). Shifts of Coherence in Quran Translation. *Sayyab Translation Journal*. Kuwait University. p. 2

Theoretical Background

A- Defining Coherence

“Coherence is a concept which in its complexity is still not fully understood and a matter of continuing debate”¹. Hence, defining coherence as a starting point would undoubtedly help in clearing out its mystery and relieving it from its mystifying aura.

Beaugrande and Dressler expressed the same viewpoint much earlier than Bublitz, and stated that “the study of coherence...does not, of course, promise to be simple”.²

Coherence is discussed in several textbooks of linguistics and translations and was given different definitions by a wide range of scholars and linguists.

According to Beaugrande and Dressler, coherence “concerns the ways in which the components of the textual world, i.e. the configuration of concepts and relations which underlie the surface text, are mutually accessible and relevant”³

Basil Hatim defines coherence, following Beaugrande (1980), as “the procedures which ensure conceptual connectivity, including (1) logical relations, (2) organization of events, objects and situations, and (3) continuity in human experience.”⁴

Roger T Bell says that coherence “consists of the configuration and sequencing of the concepts and relations of the textual world which underline and are realized by the surface text”.⁵

For Neubert and Shreve, a coherent text is the one that “has an underlying logical structure that acts to guide the reader through the text. This structure helps the reader overcome his ignorance of specific details.”⁶

Mona Baker defines coherence as “a network of relations which organize and create a text.”⁷

Maria Gonzalez Davies simplistically defines coherence this way: “a text should hang together according to external factors such as text typology, style or genre conventions”⁸

Coherence is often described as “an underlying organizing structure making the words and sentences into a unified discourse that has cultural significance for those who create or comprehend it.”⁹

¹ Bublitz.W. (1999). Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. p.1

² De Beaugrande, R., & Dressler, W. U. (1981) Introduction to Text linguistics. London; New York: Longman. P.70

³ Ibid: 70

⁴ Hatim. B. (1990). Discourse and the Translator. New York: Longman. P.195

⁵ Bell. R. T. (1991). Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice. London and New York Longman Group UK Limited. P.165

⁶ Neubert. A.& Shreve. G. (1992). Translation as Text. Kent: The Kent State University Press. P 194

⁷ Baker.M. (1992). In Other Words. London and New York: Routledge. P 218

⁸ Davies.M.G. (2004). Multiple Voices in the Translation Classroom. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. P228

⁹ Hatim.B&Munday.J. (2004). Translation: An Advanced Resource Book. New York: Routledge. P 194

Following Sanna-KaizaTanskannen¹, coherence is “the outcome of dialogue between the text and its listener or reader.”

As reported by Giuseppe Palumbo who compiled in his book “Key Terms In Translation Studies” a considerable number of terms and concepts, coherence “refers to the ways in which an utterance is seen to establish meaningful relations between its parts from a conceptual i.e. semantic or logical) point of view”².

Not least in importance, in his book The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies, Jeremy Munday reports that coherence “refers to the accessibility, relevance and logic of the concepts and relations underlying the surface texture of a text”³.

Drawing from these definitions, it can be inferred that coherence guides the reader by means of logic, relevance, ideas ordering and continuity in human experience, through a given text to arrive at a particular pre-established meaning.

B- Literature Review

Studies on coherence have been conducted by many esoteric researchers in the realm of linguistics and translation, namely Van Dijk (1977); Beaugrande and Dressler (1981); Enkvist (1985); Blum Kulka (1986); Neubert Albrecht and Shreve Gregory (1992); Mona Baker (1992); and Sanna-KaisaTanskannen (2006) to name only a few.

In Beaugrande and Dressler’s words, “we could define the continuity of senses as the foundation of coherence, being the mutual access and relevance within a configuration of concepts and relations”⁴. The relation between coherence and continuity of senses can be elucidated as follows;

“A text makes sense because there is a continuity of senses among the knowledge activated by the expressions of the text. A ‘senseless’ or ‘non-sensical’ text is one in which text receivers can discover no such continuity, usually because there is a serious mismatch between the configuration of concepts and relations expressed and the receiver’s prior knowledge of the world”

(Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981, p.53)

The reader or receiver understands the presented ideas in a given text only when they are congruent with what s/he knows based on his or her experience with the knowledge acquired of the culture s/he is immersed in.

For Beaugrande, coherence can be established by means of 1) logical relations, 2) organization of events, objects and situations, and continuity in human experience”⁵

¹ Tanskanen, S.-K. (2006). Collaborating Towards Coherence: Lexical Cohesion in English Discourse. Amsterdam: Benjamins. P 7

² Palumbo. G. (2009). Key Terms in Translation Studies. London: Continuum. P 16

³ Munday. J. (2009). The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies. New York: Routledge. P 171

⁴ De Beaugrande, R., & Dressler, W. U. (1981) Introduction to Text linguistics. London; New York: Longman. P 53

⁵ De Beaugrande, R., & Dressler, W. U. (1981) Introduction to Text linguistics. London; New York: Longman. P 195

Coherence is viewed as “a semantic property of discourses based on the interpretation of each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences.”¹ In Van Dijk’s (1977) terms, “coherence relations between sentences are not only based on the sequential relations between expressed or interpolated propositions, but also on the topic of discourse of a particular passage”². To illustrate sequential or linear coherence as Van Dijk terms it, sequential coherence refers to the “coherence relations holding between propositions expressed by composite sentences and sequences of sentences”³. Coherence includes two levels: “Micro-coherence, which is the linear or sequential relations between propositions, and the Macro-coherence, the global or overall coherence of a discourse in terms of hierarchical topic progression”⁴. Nigel Armstrong seems to be on the same wavelength with Van Dijk’s perception of Macro-coherence. For him, coherence “implies an intelligible progression of ideas through a text. For a text to make sense, the progression needs to be logical, and must also be sufficiently explicit and rational, in the sense of referring overtly to concepts shared by writer and reader.”⁵

Blum Kulka views coherence “as a covert potential meaning relationship among parts of a text, made overt by the reader or listener through process of interpretation”⁶. Therefore, this process requires the involvement of the reader and listener and their ability to “relate the text to relevant and familiar worlds, either real or fictional”⁷. To say it differently, coherence has been understood by Blum Kulka as “the realization(s) of the text’s meaning potential”⁸. To explain, this realization is handled from two main perspectives, theoretical and empirical ones. Theoretically, the text’s meaning is established by “postulating an ‘ideal reader...or empirically, by investigating the ways a given text has been remembered or interpreted by various readers, as done in text processing psycho-linguistic research.”⁹

Neubert and Shreve investigate coherence and deem it as the determining factor in modifying the semantic structure of the text. They believe that the “information contents of a text are not randomly transmitted semantic quanta”¹⁰. Based on Grice’s maxims of manner and relation they conclude that there “is order imposed on the information content.” And “this order is a logical structure which defines the semantic connections between information units in the

¹ Van Dijk. T. A. (1977). *Text and Context: Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*. London: Longman. P 93

² Van Dijk. T. A. (1977). *Text and Context: Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*. London: Longman. P 95

³ Ibid: 95

⁴ Tangkiengsirisin, S. (2012). *Cohesion and Coherence in Text*. Thammasat University Journal. P 3

⁵ Armstrong. N. (2005). *Translation, Linguistics, Culture: A French-English Handbook*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD. P 191

⁶ Shoshana. B.K. (1986). "Shifts in Cohesion and Coherence in Translation." *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication*. (Eds.). Juliane House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka. Tiibingen: Verlag Gunter Narr. P 291

⁷ Shoshana. B.K. (1986). "Shifts in Cohesion and Coherence in Translation." *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication*. (Eds.). Juliane House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka. Tiibingen: Verlag Gunter Narr. P 291

⁸ Ibid: 292

⁹ Ibid: 296

¹⁰ Neubert. A.& Shreve. G. (1992). *Translation as Text*. Kent: The Kent State University Press. P 93

text”¹. Thus, coherence is described as a “property which texts assume when their information contents take on such a logical structure”².

In translation, therefore, coherence cannot be re-established in the TT “using literal sentence-for-sentence renderings”. To sum up this point, “L2 coherence must be recreated using the translator’s understanding of the coherence structure of the original to direct modifications in the L2 textual surface”³.

In addition to the logical structure that underlies a given text, Neubert and Shreve approach coherence in its relationship with meaning construction. As an illustration, coherence is thought to “impart to words and constructions more meaning than they contain in isolation”⁴. This point has been argued by procedural semanticists who deem that “meanings are not static... Meaning is constructed, emerging as the result of processes applied when texts are read or heard”⁵. From here, a basic question arises in the eyes of both authors. They inquire about the textual and linguistic agents that connect concepts and enable the translator to establish a logical framework for the text. In this line of inquiry, the following excerpt serves as a vivid illustration;

“The raw materials of coherence are supplied when a text producer embeds elements of his or her stock of knowledge in the text. More raw material is supplied when the text user applies a stock of knowledge to the interpretation of the text. But coherence is not an information unit; it is the connection of individual information elements to create larger, more global structures of meaning.”
(Neubert and Shreve, 1992, p.95-96)

This larger structure is regarded as a ‘propositional structure’ “which places the elements (actions, objects, events) of the knowledge domain in logical relation to one another”⁶. The translator, however, is concerned with reproducing in the TT the global arrangement of propositions embedded in a given text⁷. The text’s coherence is prone to be spoiled by mistranslations, which not only damage items and sentences but also have crippling effects on the text in its entirety, considering that “coherence relations connect the damaged item to other items”⁸. To conclude, it is firmly believed that “understanding the factors that determine coherence in the L1 text is an important factor in translation. The translator’s own mental model of the text guides him when he selects linguistic resources for his rendering of the L2 text”⁹. Mona Baker, also examining coherence, gave it a much simpler definition, as “the way stretches of language are connected to each other”¹⁰. These stretches of language are linked by

¹ Neubert. A.& Shreve. G. (1992). Translation as Text. Kent: The Kent State University Press. P 93

² Ibid: 93

³ Ibid : 93

⁴ Ibid : 93

⁵ Neubert. A & Shreve. G (1992). Translation as Text. Kent: The Kent State University Press. P 95

⁶ Neubert. A & Shreve. G (1992). Translation as Text. Kent: The Kent State University Press. p 96

⁷ Ibid : 96

⁸ Ibid : 97

⁹ Ibid : 98

¹⁰ Baker.M. (1992). In Other Words. London and New York: Routledge. P 218

virtue of “conceptual or meaning dependencies as perceived by language users”¹. As mentioned by Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), ‘continuity of sense’ is established by the reader’s ability to “recognize underlying semantic relations” (P.219). In Michael Hoey’s terms, coherence is “subjective and judgements concerning it may vary from reader to reader”². By the same token, Charroles (1983) reports that coherence of a text is determined by the receiver’s ability to construe the cues present in the discourse allowing him/her to perceive it as a unified whole, or “in a way which corresponds with his idea of what it is that makes a series of actions into an integrated whole”³.

In the following passage, Mona Baker unfolds what makes a stretch of language discernible;

“The ability to make sense of a stretch of language depends on the hearer’s or reader’s expectations and experience of the world. Different societies, and indeed different individuals and groups of individuals within the same society, have different experiences of the world and different views on the way events and situations are organized or related to each other. A network of relations which is valid and makes sense in one society may not be valid in another.”

(Mona Baker, 1992, p.219)

What seems to be clear, however, is that the reader or hearer understands a particular view of the world or reality in a given text, no matter how s/he approaches it, providing this view or reality make sense and happen to be believable, homogeneous or relevant⁴. To put it differently, a text is coherent when the reader manages to make sense of it by “relating it to what s/he already knows or to a familiar world, whether this world is real or fictional”⁵.

In translation, the translator has to bear in mind the ensuing deciding factors that affect the coherence of a text;

“knowledge available to his/her target readers and of the expectations they are likely to have about such things as the organization of the world, the organization of language in general, the organization and conventions of particular text types, the structure of social relations, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of certain kinds of linguistic and nonlinguistic behaviour, among other things.”

(Mona Baker, 1992, p.222)

¹ Ibid : 218

² Baker. M. (1992). In Other Words. London and New York: Routledge.p 218

³ Ibid: 219

⁴ Baker. M. (1992). In Other Words. London and New York: Routledge.p 219

⁵ Ibid : 221

In sum, any stretch of language or new information makes sense only when it goes in line with the receiver's own "knowledge, beliefs, and previous experience of both linguistic and non-linguistic events."¹

Much work on coherence was carried out in 2006 by SannaKaisa-Tanskannen. She reports that the concept of coherence has been widely discussed in text and discourse studies. For her, coherence "resides not in the text, but is rather the outcome of a dialogue between the text and its listener or reader"². Tanskannen, like the aforementioned authors, namely Mona Baker and Neubert and Shreve, underlines that coherence "is not inherent in text as such, but rather it is the result of interpretation process and ultimately depends on the relation between the receiver and the text, and that cohesive devices predispose receivers to find the coherence"³. In other words, understanding coherence may vary from one reader to another, and the background knowledge possessed by a given receiver is believed to be a decisive factor in making the perception of coherence more attainable and readily interpretable. For further clarification, coherence, in Tanskannen's words, "can be perceived and communication is more likely to be successful if the receiver's background knowledge is sufficient for making an interpretation"⁴. The author reaches the conclusion, in her analysis of coherence and cohesion, that there exists an interplay between the two former standards of textuality in that "the presence of cohesive devices in a text facilitates the task of recognizing its coherence"⁵. She also claims that "successful communication depends on both cohesion and coherence, which are simultaneously independent and intertwined"⁶. From here, the author raises a pointed question about the way or manner the interplay between cohesion, coherence and the communicators can be achieved in a communicative situation. Answers to this question derive their main substance from the fundamental tenets of the cooperative principle, relevance theory and collaborative theory. For example, in a communicative situation, coherence is established when the producer gives the receivers "indications of the coherence of the message to help them interpret the message so that it seems coherent for them"⁷.

As noted above, coherence is defined differently, and its perception may vary from one author to another and from reader to reader or listener. Beaugrande and Dressler deem continuity of senses as the backbone of coherence. Van Dijk ascertains that coherence comprises two levels: Micro-coherence (the linear or sequential relations between propositions) and Macro-coherence (the global coherence of a discourse in terms of hierarchical topic progression). Blum Kulka, Mona Baker, Nigel Armstrong, and SannaKaisa-Tanskannen believe that a text becomes coherent when the reader or receiver manages to interpret it and relate it to a relevant and familiar world. Neubert and Shreve affirm that a coherent text is governed by a logical structure that defines the semantic connections between information units in the text.

¹ Baker. M. (1992). In *Other Words*. London and New York: Routledge. p 222

²Tanskanen, S.-K. (2006). *Collaborating Towards Coherence: Lexical Cohesion in English Discourse*. Amsterdam: Benjamins. P 7

³ Ibid : 20

⁴ Tanskanen, S.-K. (2006). *Collaborating Towards Coherence: Lexical Cohesion in English Discourse*. Amsterdam: Benjamins. P 20

⁵ Ibid : 21

⁶Tanskanen, S.-K. (2006). *Collaborating Towards Coherence: Lexical Cohesion in English Discourse*. Amsterdam: Benjamins. p 21

⁷ Ibid : 22

Eventually, besides the reader's ability to make an interpretation of the text, Tanskannen claims that cohesive devices enormously help the receivers find coherence.

C- Data and Methodology

Coherence, as previously discussed, has to do with the continuity of senses on a broader level along with related relations. In Yves Gambier and Luc Van Doorslaer's words, coherence "has to be interpreted as relations between concepts and a continuity of senses"¹. The continuity of senses, from the reader's perspective based on a translational paradigm, is believed to be worth exploring in the translations of the Holy Qur'an rendered by two major and well-known Muslim translators, as highlighted below.

The present study is comparative-descriptive and qualitative-based. This kind of research "produces findings that are not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification."²

The present study, which stems its essential substance from a meticulously selected verse from the Holy Qur'an, investigates one of the most fundamental components of textuality. The component in question is coherence, looked at from a pointed perspective, namely reader-focused coherence shifts, as mentioned previously.

To analyse the data pertaining to the concept of coherence, the act of worship (*Zakāt*) has been chosen for investigation and examination. In this regard, the study covered the translations conducted by two prominent translators with Muslim backgrounds, namely Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Asad. Two pioneering exegetes, mentioned below, have been of great assistance in the process of analysing and interpreting the data under scrutiny in the study at hand. The analysis methodology employed by researchers in this regard also relies on the work of English lexicographers for the study data. Notably, Merriam Webster and Oxford Dictionary. The major exegetical books utilized in the study are:

-*Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (تفسير القرآن) by 'abdu al- Razāq al-San' ānī.

-*Tafsīral-ṭabarī :Jāmi' u' al-Bayān* (تفسير الطبري = جامع البيان) by al-ṭabarī

In view of the limitations of our space, our attention has entirely been focused on studying one specific term, namely "Zakāt". The term under discussion, being solely chosen amongst many others to be scrutinized and analysed, is painstakingly examined and investigated on a much deeper level. Any addition of perspective terms would undoubtedly violate the norms of writing academic articles.

D-Data Analysis

Analysis of the term Zakāt in Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Asad's Translations

¹ Gambier, Y & Doorslaer, V.L. (2009). The Metalanguage of Translation. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. p 49

² Hatch. J.M. (2002). Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings. Albany: State University of New York Press. P 6

Coherence, as a multi-faceted term, has been defined in many ways, approached from a number of perspectives, and studied in various disciplines and areas of knowledge. The article investigates reader-focused coherence shifts in Qur'an translation or world knowledge correlate, to say it differently. Creed 'aqida', acts of worship 'al 'ibādāt', and dealings or worship of transactions 'al Mu'āmalāt' are workable terms, and constitute potential research areas to explore and analyse comparatively and descriptively regarding the establishment of coherence in the ST and the TT. Due to the limitation of this study, only one of these terms is investigated. Zakāt, as an act of worship, is viewed to have many shades of meaning in the translations of the two translators in question; Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Asad.

Sample one: Zakāt

Source text	Target text (Yusuf Ali)	Target Text (Asad)
"وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ" (البقرة 43)	(2:43) "And be steadfast in prayer; Practise regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship)"	(2:43) "and be constant in prayer, and spend in charity, and bow down in prayer with all who thus bow down."

Translation assessment of the term Zakāt (Yusuf Ali)

Yusuf Ali translates Zakāt in verse (2:43) "وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ" **"And be steadfast in prayer; Practice regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship)"** as practice the regular charity. However, he provides the reader or receiver with neither partial nor detailed explanation in his footnote. What seems to be clear, based on Yusuf's translation, is that Zakāt has been used as an equivalent to charity. With this in mind, defining both terms, that is Zakāt and charity, at this stage seems of paramount importance. Merriam Webster Dictionary (2017) defines charity as "generosity and helpfulness especially toward the needy or suffering;" or "a gift for public benevolent purposes". Oxford Dictionary (2017) describes it as "The voluntary giving of help, typically in the form of money, to those in need". Based on these definitions, it apparently emerges that charity is an act of benevolence and its corresponding term in the SL culture is known as 'Sadaqa'¹. Conversely, Zakāt in Islamic law denotes a different meaning, namely higher degrees of giving that charity literally lacks. To clarify, AL-Tabary describes Zakāt, when paired together with Salāt, as "a mandatory duty human beings should pay for the love of God", which originally refers to "increasing money and making it grow and develop constantly"² (my translation). Al San'ānī reports that Zakāt is "a purification and growth as well. It has been termed so since it is rewarded by purifying one's money from wrongdoings and unlawful property as long as it is given for the love of God. Giving Zakāt also makes one's own money grow, benefit from

¹ based on extensive reading, mainly Mohamed Farghal and Noura Bloushi. (2012). Shifts of Coherence in Quran Translation. Kuwait University

² Tabari. (310 AH). JamiulBayan. Cairo: Dar Al Jowzi. V: 1. P 573

more blessing and be safeguarded from any unpredictable losses”¹ (my translation). Badawi Jamal (2010) states in one of his interviews that “In the legislative sense, in terms of Islamic jurisprudence, Zakāt simply means paying a part of ones’ assets to rightful beneficiaries. This is also an act of the love of God and obedience to him”². Therefore, Zakāt, one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, is viewed to carry spiritual meaning (purification of money and oneself) and religious obligation (calculated at 2.5 per cent of the annual income of a person or family) that definitely charity does not contain.

Translation assessment of the term Zakāt (Muhammad Asad)

Muhammad Asad translates the term “Zakāt” as mentioned in verse (2:43) mentioned above using the same word Yusuf Ali opts for in his translation: “and be constant in prayer, and spend in charity, and bow down in prayer with all who thus bow down.”. In his footnote, Asad affirms that “zakah denotes an obligatory tax, incumbent on Muslims, which is meant to purify a person's capital and income from the taint of selfishness (hence the name).” He continues his explanation by referring to Zakāt with another appellation (purifying dues) in an attempt to capture the true meaning of the term in focus based on its connotative sense. From here, two basic questions arise; do Zakāt and tax refer to the same concept? To what extent term inconsistency can affect the mind of the reader/receiver? To illustrate, Badawi Jamal (2010) ascertains that “the term tax is not appropriate... because most people think of something that one has to pay or be punished by law. When one pays tax, one pays it reluctantly while trying to seek every deduction possible or to avoid it completely”³. Mohammad Zakir Hossain highlights and summarizes the main dissimilarities between Zakāt and Tax. He affirms that Zakāt is an act of worship, whereas Tax is a social obligation. What is more, Zakāt is “essentially a matter between God and His servants, but tax has been primarily a matter between citizens and the state authorities”. Adding to this, Zakāt is “a permanent and regular system. None can change it in any way. On the contrary, most of the taxes undergo change from time to time and from country to country”⁴. Ihab ‘id explains, in one of his lectures about the Zakat and taxation system, six features Taxation is characterized by. “First, Taxation is a financial obligation. Second, it is deducted in an obligatory manner. Third, it is a government imposition. Fourth, taxation is non- refundable. Fifth, it is non-conditional. Sixth, taxation is a means whereby the government fulfils the requirements of the financial policy of the country”⁵. As a matter of fact, Zakāt and tax are two different concepts. Zakāt is typically an Islamic order, spent for the government’s needs, given to the needy and limited at a specific percentage and specific materials based on the Islamic Shari‘a, whereas Tax is mainly governmental, spent to cater for the government’s needs and does not have a specified limitation (experts determine its limitation). Moreover, the suggested terms ‘charity’, ‘purifying dues’, ‘almsgiving’ (also mentioned in his footnote) do not encompass the concept of Zakāt in the Islamic law given the

¹ Al Sanaani (211 AH). Tafesiru Al Quran. Arriyad : Al Rushed office. V : 1. P 13

² Badawi. J. Retrieved from: http://jamalbadawi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46:57-pillars-of-islam&zakah-charity&catid=17:volume-5-the-pillars-of-islam&Itemid=18

³ Badawi. J. Retrieved from: http://jamalbadawi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46:57-pillars-of-islam&zakah-charity&catid=17:volume-5-the-pillars-of-islam&Itemid=18

⁴ Hossain. M.Z. (2012). Zakat in Islam: A Powerful Poverty Alleviating Instrument For Islamic Countries. International Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment Vol. 3, No 1. Pp 6-7

⁵ Eid.I. (n.d). Nizam Al Zakat wa Al Daraib. College of applied studies and community service. Pp 5-6

aforementioned and underscored facts about both terms. Besides, the translator is observed to be inconsistent in his terminology and fails in establishing coherence regarding the reader's world knowledge of the concept and its relevant relation. In other words, the erroneous rendition of the term *Zakāt* dramatically affects the reader's mind and by implication leads to reader-focused coherence shifts. Consequently, the reader/receiver may not fully fathom nor come up with a sound interpretation of the term in question and, therefore, the term *Zakāt* stands inscrutable and the reader seems to be unable to correlate a totally new concept with his or her knowledge of the world. This viewpoint is elaborately dealt with in the ensuing extended analysis.

Translation assessment of both translators (Yusuf and Asad)

Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Asad have been ineffective in capturing the essence meaning of a culture-bound term '*Zakāt*'. Yusuf Ali renders the term as Charity with no explanation in his footnote, and Muhammad Asad's endeavors to approximate the meaning of the term in question to the TT reader (supposedly the western world and whoever interested in learning about Islam) through a brief account in his footnote seems to culminate in terminological, pragmatic and semantic loss. Translating *Zakāt* as charity and suggesting two more terms in the footnote apparently pushes the reader to swim into an ocean of confusion and interpretability of such terms or concepts becomes a question of wishful thinking.

Coherence, the researchers' area of interest, is observed to be not maintained in both translations as it does not go in line with the essential precepts the vast majority of scholars advocate in this regard. Beaugrande and Dressler strongly believe that coherence is established when "the configuration of concepts and relations which underlie the surface text, are mutually accessible and relevant"¹. Thus, *Zakāt*, based on the proposed translations and the additional explanation in the footnote, is neither accessible nor relevant to the receiver's world knowledge. To say it another way, a text makes no sense when "there is a mismatch between the configuration of concepts and relations expressed and the receiver's prior knowledge of the world"². Blum Kulka views coherence as a process that requires the involvement and the ability of the reader and listener to "relate the text to relevant and familiar worlds, either real or fictional"³. Bearing in mind the fact that the debatable term is diametrically unfamiliar to the TT reader, it becomes so hard for the receiver to draw the link between *Zakāt* and something pertaining to his/her familiar worlds. Basil Hatim reports that coherence takes its shape when it ensures "continuity in human experience"⁴. Accordingly, continuity in human experience cannot be maintained as both translations have clearly diverted the ST intended meaning. If coherence is defined as "the outcome of dialogue between the text and its listener or reader"⁵, the reader is seen to be misled by the proposed translations and the text is far from being coherent for him or her. The receiver cannot differentiate between '*Zakāt*', 'charity' and 'tax'. Each of which denotes a specific meaning governed by the environment in which it occurs as

¹ De Beaugrande, R., & Dressler, W. U. (1981) *Introduction to Text linguistics*. London; New York: Longman. P 7

² Ibid: 53

³ Shoshana. B.K. (1986). "Shifts in Cohesion and Coherence in Translation." *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication*. (Eds.). Juliane House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka. Tiibingen: Verlag Gunter Narr. p 291

⁴ Hatim. B. (1990). *Discourse and the Translator*. New York: Longman. P 195

⁵ Tanskanen, S.-K. (2006). *Collaborating Towards Coherence: Lexical Cohesion in English Discourse*. Amsterdam: Benjamins. P 7

shown above. To say it differently, in Tanskannen's words, coherence "is not inherent in text as such, but rather it is the result of interpretation process and ultimately depends on the relation between the receiver and the text..." (ibid: 20)¹.

To reiterate, the translators' attempt to render the term in question into an acceptable, accessible and decipherable one for the TT reader has been ineffective, and resulted in a number of conspicuous losses (semantic, pragmatic, phonic and graphic, to mention only a few) affecting the reader's mind immensely as far as the establishment of coherence is concerned. Firstly, Translating Zakāt with charity results in losing the denotative meaning, as both terms are not synonymous. Secondly, the pragmatic overtones of a culture-bound term are viewed to be lost. As elucidated above, the term Zakāt denotes a wide range of spiritual and cultural meanings that the word charity does not contain. The notion of untranslatability regarding this issue is clearly expounded by Catford. He reports that "cultural untranslatability" arises "when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL is a part"². Catford's classification of untranslatability into two essential categories (linguistic and cultural)³ seems to overlook another crucial component pertaining to the realm of religion. Translators should consider religious untranslatability whenever they embark on translating the sacred text in focus. The term Zakāt is always paired together with 'Salāt' in the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, the phonic patterns are observed to be lost in verse (2:43). The reoccurrence or repetition of the terminal rhyming sounds /at/ الصلاة and الزكاة does not conform, neither semantically nor phonologically, with the TT terms leading the text to be incoherent in so many different aspects.

E- Discussing and Findings:

In the course of the present article, researchers have endeavoured to answer the following questions:

- To what extent coherence is established in the target text as an exact replica of the original qur'anic text?
- What are the main difficulties and intractable problems the translators encounter while dealing with the issue of coherence?
- What strategies do the two translators adopt to compensate for the loss, if any?

The questions raised above have been answered by scrutinizing one term taken from the Holy Qur'an. Namely, *Zakāt*.

The translators' attempt to render the term in focus into an acceptable and accessible one for the TT reader has been viewed to be ineffective. It therefore resulted in a smorgasbord of losses at many levels, thereby affecting the reader's mind enormously with regard to the maintainability of coherence, or the establishment of correlation between the term in question and the receiver's familiar world/world knowledge, to say it differently. The term 'Zakāt', thus,

¹ Ibid: 20

² Catford.J.C. (1965). A Linguistic Theory of Translation. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P 99

³ Ibid : 94

is far from being an equivalent to ‘charity’, as rendered by the translators in focus, nor to any kind of ‘obligatory tax’ as Asad explains in his footnotes. It is the researchers’ deeply held conviction that the term ‘Zakāt’ should be first transliterated by the two translators because of its religious specificity, more significantly. Secondly, the translators should possess an exegetical knowledge that facilitates the arduous task of translating the meaning of the Holy Qur’an.

To reiterate, this study has shown that coherence is not maintained in the TT the same manner it is kept in the original Qur’anic text, and neither the translators in focus nor the language itself make it permissible for feasible compensation of the loss that transpires at many levels as shown in the course of this article. The researchers would love to highlight a number of difficulties faced by Yusuf and Asad, share the strategies implemented by the aforementioned translators to make up for the omnipresent loss created while translating the Holy Qur’an, and ultimately put forward some suggestions for the Holy Qur’an translators. Some of these difficulties are mainly terminological and religious and come out as a result of the idiosyncratic nature of a religiously bound term, as demonstrated above. The translators in focus, therefore, seek refuge in annotated footnote as a strategy to compensate for the potential meaning loss.

Suggestions for the Holy Qur’an translators

- Culture and religious specific terms should be transliterated and accompanied with comprehensive explanations in the form of a glossary or annotated footnotes. Pronunciation directives should also be provided for the TT reader. In-text explanation is believed to spoil the naturalness of the translated text.
- Translators should be consistent when it comes to translating culture or religious specific terms to guarantee better understanding and safeguard the reader from potentially swimming into an ocean of confusion.
- Translators are required to be conversant with exegetical knowledge to reach the accurate intended meaning, as conveyed in the Holy Qur’an.
- The translators should be well aware of the layers of meaning an individual word or a pair of lexical items denote.
- The researchers place more emphasis on the significance of the context of situation when dealing with religious bound terms.

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