




**Translation of the Prophets' Names in the Holy
Quran: between Domestication and Foreignization**

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Abstract:

The translation of sacred texts tends to attract much attention among researchers. This is evident in the number of studies available. The main aim of this paper is to explore the different procedures and methods applied by the translators selected for the purpose of this research, Abdel Haleem, Khan & Al-Hilali, Cleary, Saheeh International translation, and Pickthall. Harvey and Higgins' three procedures for translating proper nouns, and Venuti's notion of domestication and foreignization, are explored. The translation of proper nouns can result in a number of difficulties for translators since no exact equivalent can be found in dictionaries. Therefore, there is a need for research on the translation of proper nouns to identify the most suitable approach for translating them. The five translators selected in this paper, and their translations of the 24 prophets' names were analyzed. The primary method used in this paper is textual analysis. The data was collected and analyzed qualitatively. The results show that both cultural transplantation and domestication were generally used by the five translators, resulting in a target-oriented translation. It is recommended that the translators identify their target readers are as this could help in applying the appropriate procedures and methods.

key words: translation procedures, translation methods, proper nouns, prophet names, translation.

ترجمة أسماء الأنبياء في القرآن الكريم: بين التوطين والتغريب؟

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ملخص الدراسة:


تميل ترجمة النصوص المقدسة إلى جذب الكثير من الاهتمام بين الباحثين. وهذا ما انعكسه الأبحاث العديدة عنها. والهدف الرئيس من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف الإجراءات والأساليب المختلفة المطبقة من المترجمين المختارين في هذه الدراسة وهم، عبد الحليم، خان والهلالي، كليري، ترجمة صحيح انترناشونال، بيكتال. وذلك باستخدام استراتيجيات هارفي وهيجينز لترجمة أسماء الأعلام ونظرية فينوتي، التوطين والتغريب. ويمكن أن تؤدي ترجمة أسماء الأعلام إلى عدد من الصعوبات للمترجمين لعدم وجود مقابل مماثل في القواميس؛ لذلك هناك حاجة للقيام بأبحاث في ترجمة أسماء الأعلام لتحديد الوسيلة الأنسب لترجمتها. وقد حللت هذه الدراسة ترجمة المترجمين الخمسة المختارين في هذه الدراسة لأسماء الأنبياء الأربعة والعشرين. والمنهجية الرئيسة المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة هي التحليل النصي، وتشير النتائج إلى أن أغلب المترجمين الخمسة استخدموا أسلوب النقل الثقافي والتوطين في ترجمتهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إجراءات الترجمة، طرق الترجمة، أسماء الأعلام، أسماء الأنبياء، الترجمة.

A. Introduction

Proper nouns can cause a major problem for translators because they entail references to specific objects, whether in the form of people, animals, places, festivals, organizations, or other objects (Zabir and Haroon, 2018:108). According to Elewa (2015:24), this issue could appear facile to those who think proper nouns are void of meaning and only represent labels for identifying persons. However, the translation of proper nouns is not a straightforward task as it can cause several difficulties for the translator. Proper nouns are unlike other words, as their translations are not usually found in dictionaries. A plethora of research has been conducted on issues related to the translation of proper nouns and the most suitable strategy and procedure for their translation. Many researchers have argued as to whether or not proper nouns are to be translated (Newmark, 1988; Hervey and Higgins, 1992; Jaleniauskiene and Cicelyte, 2009).

Proper nouns usually hold a cultural reference or significance and therefore need to be handled with some care. One such widely-used set of proper nouns are the names of the prophets. The number of prophets who were sent to mankind is not known for sure, but twenty-five prophets are mentioned in the Quran (Alli, 2013:12). They are: Adam, Idris, Nuh, Hud, Saleh, Lut, Ibrahim, Ismail, Ishaq, Yaqub, Yusuf, Shu'aib, Ayyub, Dhulkifl, Musa, Harun,




Dawud, Suliman, Ilyas, Alyasa, Yunus, Zakariya, Yahay, Isa, and Muhammad, may peace be upon them.

The names of many prophets mentioned in the Quran are also mentioned in other holy books, such as the Bible and the Torah, and they tend to cause some difficulty for the translator in terms of which translation strategy or procedure should be applied. It could be that the translation of proper nouns creates a translation problem that stems primarily from the presence of cultural rather than linguistic differences (Al-Hadithy, 2017: 52).

One of the main aims of translation is to connect cultures and nations with different languages and religions. Reading a translated version of the Quran could be the first thing non-Muslims do when they want to know and understand something about the religion and culture of Islam. This reflects the need for, and importance of, a highly accurate and faithfully-translated version of the Quran. In addition, even Muslims whose first language is not Arabic rely on translated versions of the Quran to understand its meaning and message. This shows yet again the importance and need for more research into the translations of the Quran to identify any shortcomings and address them. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we should consider a translated version of the Quran as a replacement for the Source text, since Quranic expressions and structures are Qur'an-bound and cannot be translated into a form

equivalent to that of the original text (Abdul-Raof, 2010:1). The translator needs to take into consideration lexical, syntactic, and semantic structure (Isaa, 2017: 168). The stylistic features of the Quran must also be taken into consideration because, according to Ghazala (2008:222), style is regarded as a part and parcel of the meaning and must be given special attention.

Culture has a central role to play in issues related to translation. For some translation theorists, any translation is a translation between cultures, even if it is not desirable for it to be so (Simms (2006:10). What makes the translation of culture-specific items (CSI) a difficult task is the differences in norms between different cultures. According to Dickins et al. (2002:29) differences between cultures usually pose greater difficulties to successful translation than do linguistic differences. In every language there are proper nouns which may be specifically related to the culture of that language. Shirinzadeh and Mahadi (2014:8) are of the view that the use of proper nouns may carry specific connotations, the removal of which can lead to an inaccurate translation. This means that the translator should have knowledge of cultural references in both the source language and the target language in order to accurately render the connotation of the translated proper noun. Proper nouns mentioned in holy texts, especially the Quran, usually hold some form of cultural connotation. They cannot be regarded as just names.



According to Nord (2003:183), proper names are mono-referential but not mono-functional, as their main function is to identify an individual referent. Proper nouns inform us of the gender of the person or the connotation behind that name. She also claims that failing to render the name into the target text can result in a number of translation issues.

The German philosopher Schleiermacher first discussed the twin concepts of domestication and foreignization in 1813. He argued that "there are only two paths for a translator to follow. Either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader towards him [sic]; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the reader towards him" (cited in Venuti, 2008:15). Subsequently, Venuti developed this idea into what are now known as the two counter strategies of domestication and foreignization. A translation strategy' is more comprehensive in reference than 'translation procedure' and can be realized via more than one procedure. According to Venuti (2008), domestication focuses on minimizing the effect of foreignness in the target text and raising the awareness of the culture of the source text. On the other hand, foreignization "entails choosing a foreign text and developing a translation method along lines which are excluded by dominant cultural values in the target language" (Venuti, 1998b:242, as cited in Munday, 2012:219). This means

that there are two options for a translator when attempting to produce a translated text - either to make the text "TT/reader-oriented or ST/author-oriented" (Al-Tarawneh, 2018:1556). Albarakati (2019:3) defines domestication as an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, while on the other hand he sees foreignization as ethno-deviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad.

The main aim of this research is to identify the strategies applied in the translation of prophet names in the Quran by a number of selected translators, based on the strategies for translating proper nouns suggested by Hervey and Higgins (1992:29, as cited in Elewa, 2020:119). In addition, it will also classify the method each translator adopted - either domestication or foreignization (Venuti 2008:19).

Research questions:

The research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most frequent methods used by the translators for translating proper nouns?
2. What are the procedures used for translating Prophets' names in the Qur'an?

The translations selected for this research are as follows:

Table 1:
Quran translations

Title of translation	Publisher and place of publication	Date of first publication	Date of publication	Translator
<i>The Quran: A new translation</i>	Oxford University Press	2004	2010	Abdel Haleem, M. A. S.A (T1)
<i>Interpretation of the Meaning of the Noble Quran</i>	Maktaba Dar-us-Salam. Al Madinah Al – Munawwarah. Saudi Arabia	2007	2011	Khan and Al-Hilali (T2)
<i>The Qur'an: A new Translation</i>	Starlatch. United States of America	2004	2004	Cleary, T. (T3)
<i>Saheeh International</i>	Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust	1997	2012	Saheeh International (T4)


<i>The Meaning of the Glorious Quran: Text and explanatory translation</i>	Amana Publications . United States	1996	2006	Pickthall, M. M. (T5)
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The first translation selected in this research is the translation by Abdel Haleem (2010), hereafter (T1).

The second translation is by Khan and Al-Hilali (2011), hereafter (T2). This translation is somewhat different from other translations of the Quran in that it includes many commentaries and exegetical references to further explain the meaning of the verses.

The third translation is by Thomas Cleary (2004), hereafter (T3). Cleary is a well-known author and translator. This translation is free from any commentaries or footnotes.

The fourth translation Saheeh International (2012), hereafter (T4), is by three Muslim women who are native speakers of English. They have included some commentaries and footnotes for further explanation.



The fifth translation is by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (2006), hereafter (T5), who is a Muslim convert. He has tried to present an almost-literal and appropriate rendering worthy of the original text.

Which English translation of the Quran is more accurate or better is a matter of debate, as all have their weaknesses and strengths. The translations selected for this research were chosen according to two main criteria. First, whether or not the translator is a native speaker of English, as this can justify the translator opting for one procedure rather than another. Second, the popularity of the translation, measured by the number of prior studies conducted on these translations.

B. Research Method

This research has analyzed translations of the names of 24 prophets mentioned in the Quran. Their names were extracted from Alli (2013). These names were selected because they were also mentioned in other Holy books and therefore there is an English equivalent. The prophets' names were first identified in the source text. Then the data was quantitatively analyzed. The strategies for translating proper nouns suggested by Hervey and Higgins (1992:29, as cited in Elewa, 2020:119) were used as a framework

for the purpose of assessment. Hervey and Higgins proposed three procedures for translating proper nouns:

1. Exoticism, which means keeping the name as it has been used in the source language.
2. Transliteration, which means conveying proper nouns from the source language into the target language using the target language letters.
3. Cultural transplation, which entails replacing the name by its equivalent in the target language.

In addition, the translations were assessed in terms of which of Venuti's methods – domestication or foreignization – was applied by each translator.

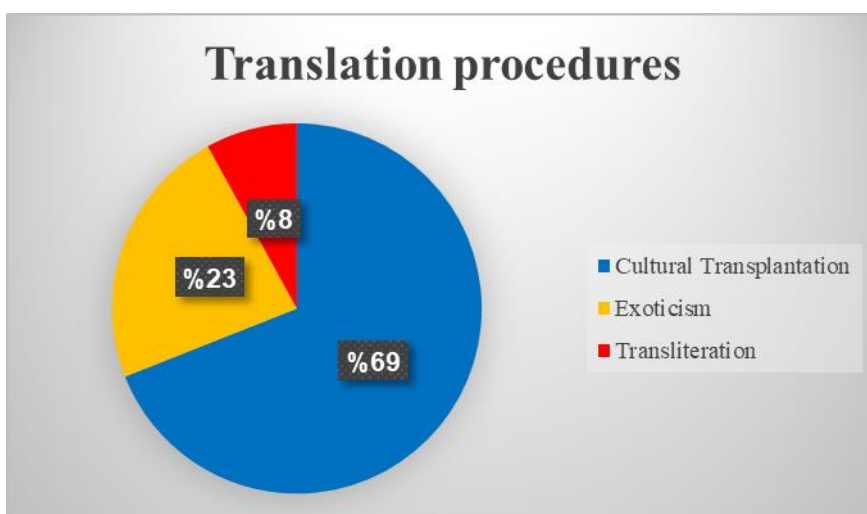
C. Findings and discussion

Findings

Based on the specified research goals, this study first examined the procedure applied by the translators, followed by the translation method they adopted. To address the first research question, the translation of each translator was examined, and the procedure

applied was identified. To address the second research question, the method applied by each translator was identified. The data collected and presented in the figures show the frequency and percentage of the procedures applied and the methods used.

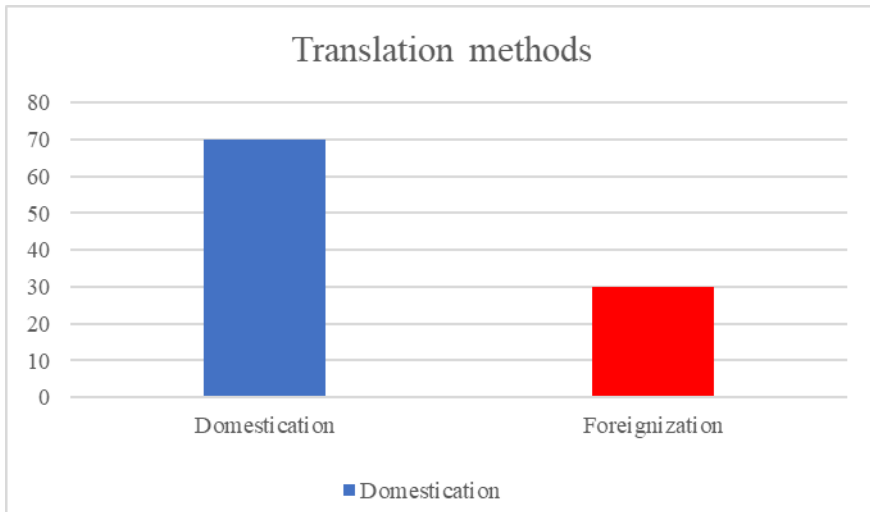
Figure 1:
Translation procedures



It can be seen in Figure 1 that cultural transplantation was the most commonly used procedure (69%) on the part of the five translators. Exoticism (23%) was the second most commonly-used procedure by the translators. The transliteration procedure (8%) was the least commonly-used by the translators.

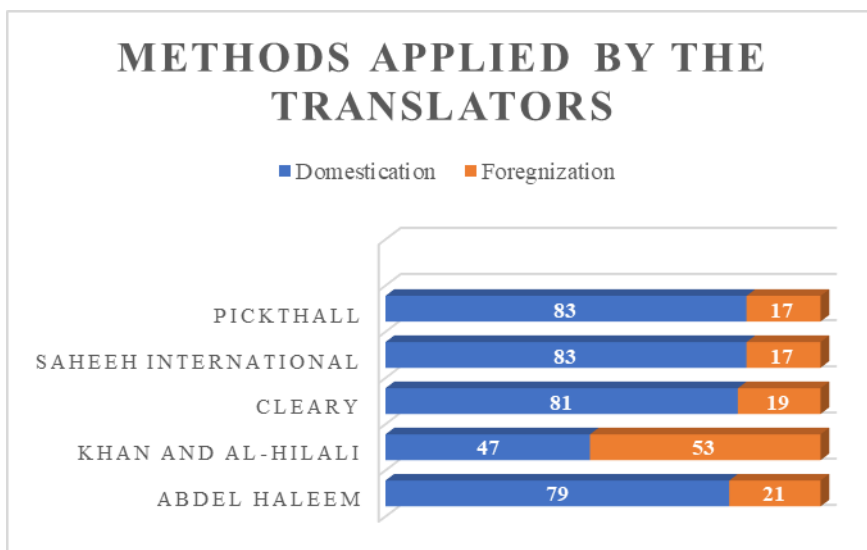
Figure 2:

Translation methods



As shown in Figure 2, the translators applied the domestication method (70%) more than foreignization methods (30%).

Figure 3:
Methods applied by the translators



It can be seen in Figure 3 that Abdel Haleem used the domestication method in 79% (19 times) of his translations and foreignization in 21% (5 times). Khan and Al-Hilali adopted domestication 47% (20 times) and foreignization 53% (23 times). Cleary applied domestication 81% (17 times) and foreignization 19% (4 times). Saheeh International used domestication 83% (19 times) and foreignization 17% (4 times). Finally, Pickthall applied domestication 83% (19 time) and foreignization 17% (4 times).

Summary

The following tables summarizes the adopted procedures and method used by the translators.

<u>Sample 1: (Q 6:8٣)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Abraham	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Ibrāhīm (Abraham)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Abraham	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Abraham	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Abraham	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
<u>Sample 2: (Q 6:٨٤)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Isaac	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Ishāq (Isaac)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Isaac	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Isaac	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Isaac	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 3: (Q 6:٨٤)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Jacob	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Ya' qūb (Jacob)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Jacob	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Jacob	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Jacob	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 4: (Q 6:8٤)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Noah	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Nūh (Noah)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Noah	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Noah	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Noah	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 5: (Q 6:8٤)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	David	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Dāwūd (David)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	David	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	David	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	David	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
<u>Sample 6: (Q 6:8٤)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Solomon	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Sulaimān (Solomon)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Solomon	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Solomon	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Solomon	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

Sample 8: (Q 6:8٤)			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Joseph	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Yūsuf (Joseph)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Joseph	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Joseph	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Joseph	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

Sample 7: (Q 6:8٤)			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Job	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Ayyub (Job)	Transliteration and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Job	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Job	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Job	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

Sample 9: (Q 6:8٤)			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Moses	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Mūsā (Moses)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Moses	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Moses	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Moses	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 10: (Q 6:8^٤)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Aaron	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Hārūn (Aaron)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Aaron	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Aaron	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Aaron	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 11: (Q 6:8^٥)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Metho adopted
T1	Zachariah	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Zakariyyā (Zechariah)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Zachariah	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Zechariah	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Zachariah	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 12: (Q 6:8^o)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	John	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Yahyã (John)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	John	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	John	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	John	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 13: (Q 6:8^o)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Jesus	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Īsã (Jesus)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Jesus	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Jesus	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Jesus	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

Sample 14: (Q 6:8^e)			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Elias	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Ilyās (Elias)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Elias	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Elias	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Elias	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

Sample 15: (Q 6:8^h)			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Ishmael	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Ismā'il (Ishmael)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Ishmael	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Ishmael	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Ismael	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

Sample 16: (Q 6:8^h)			

Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Elisha	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Yasa'a (Elisha)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Elisha	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Elisha	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Elisha	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 17: (Q 6:8¹)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Jonah	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Yūnus (Jonas)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Jonas	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Jonas	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Jonas	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 18: (Q 6:8^١)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Lot	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Lūt (Lot)	Exoticism and cultural transplantation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	Lot	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Lot	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Lot	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

<u>Sample 19: (Q 7:65)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Hud	Transliteration	Foreignization
T2	Hūd	Exoticism	Foreignization
T3	Hud	Transliteration	Foreignization
T4	Hūd	Exoticism	Foreignization
T5	Hūd	Exoticism	Foreignization

<u>Sample 20: (Q 7:73)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Salih	Transliteration	Foreignization
T2	Sālih	Exoticism	Foreignization
T3	Salih	Transliteration	Foreignization
T4	Sālih	Exoticism	Foreignization
T5	Ṣālih	Exoticism	Foreignization

<u>Sample 21: (Q 7:85)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	shu' ayb	Exoticism	Foreignization
T2	shu' aib	Exoticism	Foreignization
T3	shu' aib	Exoticism	Foreignization
T4	shu' ayb	Exoticism	Foreignization
T5	shu' ayb	Exoticism	Foreignization

<u>Sample 22: (Q 21:85)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Idris	Transliteration	Foreignization
T2	Idrīs	Exoticism	Foreignization
T3	Idris	Transliteration	Foreignization
T4	Idrees	Transliteration	Foreignization
T5	Idrīs	Exoticism	Foreignization

<u>Sample 23: (Q 21:85)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Dhu'IKifl	Transliteration	Foreignization
T2	Dhul-Kifl (Isaiah)	Transliteration and cultural transplation	Foreignization and Domestication
T3	The Holder of the Surety	None	None
T4	Dhul-Kifl	Transliteration	Foreignization
T5	Dhū al Kifl	Exoticism	Foreignization

<u>Sample 24: (Q ٣٦:٦٠)</u>			
Translator	Translation	Procedure applied	Method adopted
T1	Adam	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T2	Adam	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T3	Adam	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T4	Adam	Cultural transplantation	Domestication
T5	Adam	Cultural transplantation	Domestication

Discussion

Translation is not just rendering meaning from one language into another but is rather an integral process by which the translator makes his/her decision to impose his/her own language conventions or convey faithfully the conventions of the foreign language (Mansour, 2014:25). Translating a religious text is not a matter of literally translating the text from one language into another. This paper investigated the translation of prophet names in the Quran. It identified which of Harvey and Higgins' procedures were used by the translators. It also explored the extent to which each of Venuti's proposed translation methods were used. This involves a transference of words and meanings. The findings with regard to the 24 selected names of the prophets in the Quran showed that all

the translators with the exception of Khan and Al-Hilali have used the domestication method far more than they have used foreignization. Some of the translators have mentioned in their introductions the approach they selected in their translations. Abdel Haleem (2010:xxix) mentioned in his introduction that his intention was to make the translation accessible to everyone who speaks English, Muslim or otherwise. This can explain why he used the procedure of cultural transplantation 19 times. The Saheeh International translation (2012:ii) have also indicated that they tried to avoid transliterated Arabic terms whenever an English definition could serve, keeping exceptions to a minimum. This can be observed in the procedures they applied in their translation, as they adopted cultural transplantation 20 times. It is worth mentioning here that Khan and Al-Hilali have sometimes used two procedures in combination otherwise known as couplets (Newmark 1988:93). This can be a good approach in translating religious texts as it can help in transferring the intended meaning of the text. The most commonly-used procedure was cultural translation. This may indicate that most of the translators have tried to make the translations more familiar to the target readers. According to Dickins et al. (2002:36) the translator is expected to use the English equivalent unless there is a compelling reason not to do so.

D. Conclusions

Many studies in recent years have been conducted on translations of the Quran. The findings of this study showed that the translations were target-oriented, hence the use of domestication. What is interesting and important is that some of the translators such as Abdel Haleem (2010:xxix) and Pickthall (2006:ix) have indicated in the introduction to their translations that the work was written for the target audience. This may explain the use of the cultural transplantation procedure and domestication in most of the samples considered in this research. For a translator of a sacred text to produce a successful translation he/she needs to take into consideration many factors, such as the use of more than one strategy or procedure. They also need to take into consideration the term they are translating and the existing equivalent in the target language. Finally, it can be suggested that the translators of the Quran should indicate in their introduction to their translations who the target audience is, and the approach adopted, as this can help in selecting the appropriate strategy, procedure, and method in the translation.

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