INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEGAL STUDIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES [IJLSSS]

BARRIERS TO GRASPING AND INTERPRETING THE HOLY QURAN FOR NON- ARABIC SPEAKERS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to discuss the particular difficulties non-Arabic speakers encounter while trying to understand and interpret the Quran. Despite the Quran's worldwide influence, millions of academics and believers who want to comprehend its lessons face difficulties because of its original language, classical Arabic. This research seeks to describe the resources and approaches required to close the comprehension gap by analysing language, cultural, and interpretative obstacles. The study aims to determine the challenges that Muslim's countries have facing in grasping and interpretation the holy Quran. The sample of this study was 200 participants from different countries such as; India, Afghanistan, Djibouti, Indonesia, Iran, Sri Lanka and Tanzania who have obstacle in interpretation (Tafsir) and translating the holy Quran into other language. The tool used in the study was questionnaire (close-ended question and one question was asked from participants open-ended question) for obtaining the data in deeply. Data was collected through survey of 200 participants and analysed using statistical techniques. Four domains were taken for getting the data: barriers in translation, barriers in Tafsir, personal barriers and general feedback. The results showed that participants have facing in grasping and tafsir(interpretation) the holy Quran. The researcher figured out the biggest obstacle is most participants have same issue while reading Quran which not able to get the exact meaning of verses.

Key words: Holy Quran, non-Arabic speakers, Interpretation, Metaphor

INTRODUCTION

All people, regardless of race, nationality, or language, can benefit from the teachings of the Quran, which was revealed to the Holy Prophet and is initially addressed to Arabs. However, because it is their mother tongue, Islam has a unique allure to Arabs. The Muslims who are not Arabs work

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very hard to learn the Arabic language. They are passionate and devoted to reciting the Quran in its original Arabic, even though they find the language to be alien. Given that we are fully aware that the Quran is the authentic word of Allah, the language itself presents a barrier. Not every non-native speaker can acquire it as well as the native speakers; they can never fully get it. All they do most of the time is recognize the words and repeat them mindlessly. Although they typically recall chapters and phrases, they typically do it like a parrot and are unaware of the verses' significance. Even Arab speakers who are learning Arabic as a second language must put in a lot of effort because the Arabic script is very different from Latin, and the language itself has different grammar and organization.

HISTORY OF THE HOLY QURAN

The Quran has a long history of translation; the renowned priest Peter the Venerable translated it into Latin for the first time in the twelfth century. Due to a boom in interest in Arabic and Islamic studies in the sixteenth century, André du Ryer published the first comprehensive French translation of the Quran in 1647 AD. For more than a century, this translation remained important and served as a foundation for several translations throughout Europe (Blachère, 1976: 9). Nonetheless, numerous Muslim academics debated the viability of translating the Quran during the 20th century. Al-Azhar**, a renowned centre of Islamic scholarship in Egypt, issued a fatwa (religious decree) in 1936 that allowed the translation of the Quran with the caveat that religious rulings not be derived from translations and that the Quran be recited in its original Arabic during prayers.

The difficulty of translating the Quran persists despite proponents of translation. The Quran's divine character, distinctive Arabic style, and linguistic diversity, which permits several readings, are emphasized by proponents of this viewpoint. They contend that these qualities are challenging to adequately convey in a different language. Tilawah, or the act of reciting the Quran in Arabic, is also seen as a kind of worship, highlighting the value of the original language for appreciating its beauty and force.

Despite the difficulties, many modern academics support a sophisticated approach to translating the Quran. Making the Quran's message understandable to a larger audience is given top priority in this strategy. Important factors to take into account include making sure translators are proficient in both Arabic and the target language, emphasizing the communication of essential

meanings rather than literal translations, and adding explanatory notes to resolve ambiguities and cultural references.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE TEXT OF HOLY QURAN STRUCTURE

There are 114 surahs (as chapters) in the Quran, each with observable textual margins. The shorter surahs appear later in the Quran, while the longer ones often appear earlier. Several Ayats, or verses, combine to form each surah. Surahs differ in terms of both the quantity of verses and the word count of verses. There are 77784 words tokens and 19287 words kinds in the Quran corpus. The Arabic used in the Quran is not the same as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is the language used in formal speech and writing. The most significant difference is between syntax and lexicon. This discrepancy raises the possibility that Quranic discourse analysis will require modifications to even the techniques and resources used to analyse contemporary Arabic texts.

The Holy Quran contains many metaphorical statements about delicate subjects that require translation and analysis, like sex, divorce, death, and so forth. The sacredness and beauty of the Holy Quran make it difficult for translators to translate Qur'anic euphemisms. The translator must employ a variety of tactics, including paraphrase, partial equivalents, literal translation, functional translation, and other approaches to meet the difficulty of effectively translating Qur'anic euphemisms, in order to accurately portray Islamic principles and beliefs.

QURANIC METAPHORS

According to Pickthall (2004), the Arabic language was used to disclose the Quran, and its elegance is unparalleled. It has profound significance and elegant language (p. 2). Additionally, it is said that the Quran is a "sea of rhetoric" and that its discourse "abounds with rhetorical features more than any other Arabic discourse, classical or modern." p. 19 of Abdul-Raof (2003).

Metaphor is one of the main forms of discourse that are prevalent in the Quran. Thus, Quranic analogies have received particular emphasis in this study. Metaphors from the Quran have been employed for a variety of rhetorical and communication objectives. To emphasize the significance of the faith, they can convey knowledge, hint at a warning, provide instances, or create visuals.

Typically, there are three different levels of language comprehension: linguistic, contextual, and pragmatic. The linguistic level includes processes like syntactic analysis, which determines the grammatical relationships between the words in a sentence, and lexical access, which involves understanding the meaning of words (Glucksberg, 1998).

Searle (1979) prioritizes the literal meaning as the initial stage in comprehending metaphors. Another non-literal meaning is taken into consideration if the literal meaning is incomprehensible in the given context. However, because "any word can be a metaphor" (p. 106), Newmark (1988) contends that one must "make sense of everything" (p. 196) in order to comprehend a metaphor. According to Newmark (p. 106), one way to comprehend metaphors is to "match its primary meaning against its linguistic, situational, and cultural contexts."

Text-based and context-based methods can be beneficial, according to Knowles and Moon (2006). These methods "examine how context-based information suggests that language is metaphorical and what type of meaning bearers/readers ascribe to a metaphor" (p. 75). According to Knowles and Moon (2006), p. 75, "literal and metaphorical meanings are often associated with different clusters of collocates and different phraseologies: gold, diamond(s) co-occur with metaphorical uses." This means that there are multiple ways to distinguish between literal and metaphorical meanings. According to Knowles and Moon, the intended meaning can be recognized with the aid of the context. For instance, the phrase "Sam is a fox" makes it obvious from the context whether the topic is about a person or an animal.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY QURAN FOR NON- ARABIC SPEAKERS

The holy Quran, which God revealed to the Prophet and to humanity as a miracle, is the central text of Islamic teaching and guidance. We can comprehend God's words, accept them, and stay on the correct path if we are successful in reading this incredible book. To put it another way, knowing the Quran gives religion and life true purpose. Values like dignity, trust, cooperation, peace, happiness, enlightenment, and leadership are originate after the Quran. Can something else impart these values in people, and can nations that are taught these principles by such a book be anything other than rich and peaceful? Without a proper knowledge of the Quran's origin, how can people or nations acquire these virtues? This demonstrates the significance of comprehending the Quran. With clear thought and unrestricted knowledge, this source of value—an endless treasure—can be recognized and accepted. In order to help the spiritual inheritance and to perfect

people, this requires a link to the source, understanding of the subject, and comprehension of what is taught. In addition to being learned and recited, the Quran is meant to be thoroughly comprehended and incorporated into daily life for all people, regardless of time or place. In order to sustain life in a world that is constantly changing and to give quick, easy, and effective knowledge, it is imperative that one understands the Quran. Translators of the Quran have a great responsibility to accurately convey the message. When translating the Quran, particularly into English, the translator employs a number of translation techniques to convey the message clearly and make the Quran easier to understand.

THE ISSUE OF INTERPRETING THE HOLY QURAN

For Muslims, the most important science is tafsir, or the interpretation of the Quran. Since proper application of Islam is predicated on a proper comprehension of Allah's instruction, everything pertaining to the Islamic way of life is tied to it in one way or another. It would be impossible to properly comprehend different Quranic texts without tafsir. The Arabic word fassara, which literally translates to "lift the curtain," "make clear," or "show the objective," is the root of the word tafsir. The Qur'an made specific reference to tafsir. Numerous tafsir publications authored by Islamic scholars in the context of Islamic teaching emerged in the 20th century. They thought that the best way to address their contemporary social problems was to turn to the Quran. Jamaluddin Afghani is renowned for his efforts to address the issue from a Quranic perspective and his concern for the state of the Muslim world (Haddad1982). In addition to Aduhu and Rashid Ridha's contribution, other tafsir volumes have appeared in Egypt. Modern tafsir is distinguished by several characteristics. One is a shift toward a broader perspective of the Sura as a whole, moving away from the specialized linguistic and philosophical study of individual words. Second, tafsir al-Quran bi'l – Quran is given a lot of attention. Commentaries from the modern era make concepts from earlier contemporary works plain. Nonetheless, it appears that the methods used in contemporary comments are different from those in the early scholar's traditional tafsir. A conventional tafsir often included a study of philology and jurisprudence together with an explanation of the gathering and meaning of the Quran (Ibrahim Sharieef, 2008). This interpretive approach occasionally deceives readers about the text's meaning.

THE HOLY QURAN TRANSLATION AND CULTURE

According to Al-Jabari (2008, p. 62), the link between language and culture is one of "interwoven elements." Due to the fact that language's function both inside and as a component of cultures,

they are closely related. It has given that linguistic variations are linked to cultural variations, the metaphor as a component of a language is thought to be culturally distinctive. The cultural heritage of a particular language is conveyed through metaphors. Thus, it is referred to as the mirror reflecting the culture of language.

Thus, a number of theorists have argued for the importance of culture in translating metaphors. For instance, Mason (1982) highlights the significance of unique metaphors in translation. If a metaphor is taken from its culture as understood by the TL, he thinks the reader will be "deprived of much information of great value about the SL culture" (p. 144). Word matching or equivalency is necessary for translation to convey meaning. The contentious type of equivalency, known as cultural equivalence, attempts to replicate whatever cultural characteristics that the ST possesses in the TT. According to Bayar (2007), they can range from factors unique to the location, climate, history, customs, religion, interpersonal or intercommunity social conduct, or any cultural event that has an impact on the language community. The phrase "news that freezes the chest" (يثلج خير الصدر), for instance, is a positive term; it is happy news. However, the English phrase with a similar positive connotation, "news that warms my heart," would likely be linked with warmth. As a result, pleasant connotations in Arabic are frequently linked to cold, whereas in English, they are linked to warmth.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

To gain a thorough grasp of the problems and their solutions, a mixed-methods approach employed, integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques. Surveys, students' feedback, and an analysis of learning outcomes using various tools and techniques will all be part of this. Data for this study is based on primary data which are Muslims people for non-Arabic speakers in INDIA, SRI LANKA and some other country. These people have difficulties in grasping and interpreting the Holy Quran. The study recruited 200 participants who are non-Arabic-speaking Muslims, aged 18-45, with a range of educational and cultural backgrounds. This study aims how non-Arabic speakers grasp and interpret the holy Quran while reading. To target non-Arabic speakers studying the Quran in various locations, such as online communities, Islamic educational institutions, and Quranic study groups, convenience and snowball sampling will be employed. The tool used in this study was questionnaire for gathering data. Random sampling was used to get the data from different Muslims' country to investigate the barriers of understanding the Holy Quran for non-Arabic speakers. Questionnaires were sent to participants from various country to investigate the data for barriers grasping and interpreting the Holy Quran.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

After collecting the data, data entry and statistical analysis was performed with the statistical package for SPPS program, such as percentage, means, and standard deviations were calculated.

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

There are many problems in translating the Holy Quran due to metaphor, semantic and grammatical meaning, which makes it difficult for non- Arabic speakers to understand and interpret when the Quran is translated into the target language. Due to complexities, such as unique vocabulary and syntax context, non-Arabic speakers often face challenges in grasping the depth of Quranic messages.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1-Identify the specific challenges that non-Arabic speakers encounter in understanding the Quran.

2- Evaluate the efficacy of existing resources (translations, tafsirs, and Arabic learning aids) in overcoming these barriers.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1 -What are the main barriers non-Arabic speakers face when interpreting the Holy Quran?

2- What materials and methods can be recommended to overcome these challenges?

FINDINGS AND RESULT

Table 01: Demographic information

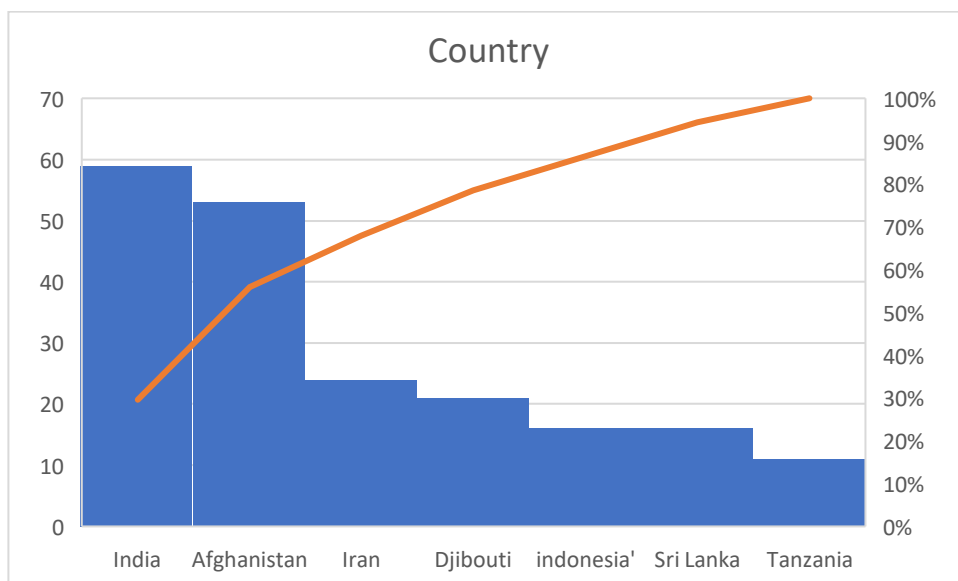| Item	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Age group	18- 25	80	41.0%
	26-35	77	38.5%
	36-45	41	20.5%
	Total	200	100%
Gender	Male	83	41.5%
	Female	117	58.5%
	Total	200	100%
Educational	Ph.D.	67	33.5%
Qualification	Master	83	41.5%
	Bachelor	33	16.5%
	High school	17	8.5%
	Total	200	100%

INTERPRETATION

According to the table above; the result showed more age group 18-25 80(41.0&), 77(38.5%) responses were 26-35 age group and 36-45 age group was 41(20.5%). On gender domain most responses were Female 117(58.5%) and male 83(41.5%). While Educational Qualification; the most response was Master 83(41.5%), Ph.D. was 67(33.5%), 33(16.5%) hold Bachelor and the less one which is high school 17(8.5%)

Figure 01: Country responses

Afghanistan |████████████████████████ (53) 26.5%

India |███████████████████████████ (59) 29.5%

Djibouti |████████ (21) 10.5%

Indonesia |██████ (16) 8.0%

Iran |█████████ (24) 12.0%

Sri Lanka |██████ (16) 8.0%

Tanzania |███ (11) 5.5%

Figure 02: Country respondents

INTERPRETATION

The results showed in the figure above that India was the most facing difficulties in understanding the Holy Quran59(29.5%) while Afghanistan53(26.5%) was the second one. Various countries were answered as well as to the survey Dibouti 21(10.5%), Indonesia 16(8.0%), Iran 24(12.0%), Sri Lanka 16(8.0%) and Tanzania 11(5.5%).

Table 02: Barriers in Translation

Resource	Frequency	Confidence in effectiveness	Effectiveness rating	Barriers addressed
Always	45(22.5%)	Very confident 65(31.5%)	Very effective 50(25%)	Vocabulary, general meaning
Often	41(20.5%)	Somewhat confident 34(17%)	Somewhat effective 70(35%)	Vocabulary, some contextual understanding
Sometime	74(37%)	Very doubtful 69(34.5%)	Neutral 35(17.5%)	Vocabulary, context of meaning
Rarely	29(14.5%)	Not confident 34(17%)	Not effective 45(22.5%)	Vocabulary, Grammar
Never	11(5.5%)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	200/100%	200/100%	200/100%	

INTERPRETATION

The table above showed the results that appears that these people rely heavily on translations, as 45 respondents (22.5%) use them constantly and most of responses were sometimes option 74(37%). While 34 respondents (17%) have some reservations about the accuracy of translations, 63 respondents (31.5%) are extremely certain that they accurately represent the meaning of the Quran. The usefulness of translations is highly questioned by a sizable majority of respondents (69 out of 200), raising questions over accuracy. In terms of effectiveness rating 50 respondents (25%) think translations are highly successful, probably because they can clearly understand what Quranic passages meaning while 80 respondents (40%) believe translations are fairly effective, implying that they assist but may not provide complete knowledge (e.g., cultural or contextual nuances) and 60 respondents (30%) find translations not effective, which suggests that they do not believe translations sufficiently convey the deeper meanings of the Quran, possibly due to linguistic and cultural differences.

Table 03: Barriers in Tafsir

Resource	Frequency	Confidence in effectiveness	Effectiveness rating	Barriers addressed
Always	35(17.5%)	Very confident 40(20%)	Very effective 50(25%)	Context, Cultural understanding
Often	45(22.5%)	Somewhat confident 70(35%)	Somewhat effective 70(35%)	The meaning of context
Sometime	50(25.5%)	Very doubtful 36(18%)	Neutral 35(17.5)	Cultural context, Clarifying verses
Rarely	39(19%)	Not confident 54(27%)	Not effective 45(22.5%)	Difficulty in understanding
Never	31(15.5%)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	200/100%	200/100%	200/100%	N/A

INTERPRETATION

The table barriers in Tafsir showed that most answer was sometime 50(25.5%) who use translation for understanding the Holy Quran, 45(22.5%) was often, 35(17.5%) respondents always using translation for understanding tafsir. In confidence effectiveness the high response was somewhat confident 70(35%) about how confident that translation fully convey the meaning, 40(20%) was confident and 54(27%) wasn't confident about translation holy Quran into another Language which gives different meaning what exactly in Arabic holy Quran.

Table 04: Personal Barriers

Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
1. Do you have challenges dedicating time	Yes	116	58%	58%
	No	84	42%	100%

to study the Holy Quran?				
If yes, what are the main challenges? (Only for those who answered "Yes" in Q1	Lack of time	20	17.24%	17.24%
	Lack of motivation	25	21.55%	38.79%
	Lack of guidance	33	28.45%	62.24
	Difficulty in understanding	38	32.76%	100%
2. I can read the Holy Quran but I am not able to understand the meaning.	Yes	165	82.5%	82.5%
	No	35	17.5%	100%
3. Reading the Holy Quran in Arabic language is easy and understandable.	Yes	87	43.5%	43.5%
	No	113	56.5%	100%

INTERPRETATION

The table above showed the results; **in Question1:** the most answer was (58%) of respondents report challenges in dedicating time to study the Holy Quran, while 42% do not face such challenges. **Question 2**: Among those who face challenges, the most common challenge is difficulty in understanding 38(32.76%), followed by lack of guidance 33(28.45%), lack of motivation 25(21.55%), and lack of time 20(17.24%). **Question 3**: A significant percentage 165(82.5%) of respondents can read the Holy Quran but struggle to understand its meaning, indicating a strong need for better comprehension tools or resources and 35 (17.5%) respondents can't read holy Quran and not understanding the meaning as well as. More than half (56.5%) of respondents find reading the Holy Quran in Arabic difficult or not easily understandable, while only 43.5% find it easy and understandable.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the Quran is extremely difficult for non-Arabic speakers due to linguistic, cultural, and interpretive barriers. Non-Arabic speakers can obtain a deeper, more accurate understanding by combining trustworthy translations, tafsir, Arabic learning materials, historical context materials, and interactive study. The results showed that most non-Arabic speaker Muslims' countries are facing difficulties in grasping and interpreting. This study consists of 200 participants 83 males and 117 females from various Muslims' country (see figure 01) to overcome the understanding of the holy Quran for non-Arabic speakers. According to the result that barriers in translation most respondents were sometime 74(37%), always45(22.5) about translation conveys full meaning when Holy Quran translates into another language and barriers in Tafsir the result was sometime 50(25.5%), often was 45(22.5%) about using translation for understanding the holy Quran. The question was asked from participants in general feedback section 'what is the biggest barrier to understand the Quran as a non- Arabic speaker' the respondent of most participants' was mentioned the meaning of verses and tafsir, and (حركات)were mentioned as a difficult in understanding holy Quran. To overcome the understanding of the Holy Quran is using a reliable tafsir, understanding religious words with precision & deeply and understanding the context (realizing the relationship between verses before and after it).

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