Adopting Religious Course's Translation in Colleges and Universities as an Essential part of English as a Foreign Language Syllabus for Enhancing English Language Learning

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Abstract
This study aimed to reveal the role of religious course translation in assisting students to gain professionality in producing well-formed syntactically, terminologically, and semantically English texts. Also, the paper is concerned with reflecting on the importance of including this course as a crucial part of English as a Foreign language syllabus in universities and colleges, explicitly rendering the Holy Quran, Hadiths of the prophet, and general religious texts. The study claimed that religious course translation is an effective tool and approach that helps L2 learners acquire English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL. The researcher adopted quantitative and qualitative approaches for collecting and analyzing the data. For gathering the data, a questionnaire was conducted among undergraduate EFL/ESL students of level 8 at King Khalid University, Almajardah campus, during the academic year 2023-2024 (1444-1445H). Sixty-two students who studied Religious Course Translation (Eng3-330) in the first and second semesters participated in the study. The majority of the students show positive attitudes toward the effectiveness and appropriateness of the religious course translation as an essential method that helps them to understand some aspects of English as a foreign language, such as correct word order, sentences' structures, new items of vocabulary, cultural issues, besides the style and genre, all of the mentioned essences helping them in improving their four language skills particularly, their communicative skills. Additionally, the findings confirm the significant role of this course in developing and promoting the students' overall English language learning, resulting in acquiring English as a Forging Language EL/ESL. The findings of this study will be beneficial for instructors who teach English as a second language and for the syllabi designers.

Keywords: English as a foreign language EFL/ESL, enhance, religious texts, syllabus, universities

Introduction

Teaching religious course translation in universities and colleges helps to develop and promote students’ English as an L2. Since, spiritual course translation expands their vocabulary, enriches their linguistic knowledge, and increases the efficiency of their participation in the class, this is due to the translation syllabus nature comprising the holy Quranic texts, which demonstrates abundantly figurative and linguistic components. Equally significant are Prophetic sayings and general religious texts that demonstrate our understanding of Islamic culture and shape our ideology. The critical point of this study is to highlight the extraordinary significance of including sacred course translation in colleges and universities within the curriculum of learning English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL.

The researcher found that, there was a consensus among languages' communities about the difficulties of translating these types of texts, as they demand highly knowledgeable scientists and specialists in linguistic and Quranic Sciences to give accurate precise meaning upon conducting the translation process from the Arabic language into English language and vice versa; therefore, teachers should expose their students to a considerable sufficient amount of input related to the sacred course's topics to enrich their vocabulary and expand their knowledge. Accordingly, including this type of translation in the colleges and universities' syllabi of English as a Foreign Language leads to develop and improve students' English competencies and their four learning skills.

Literature Review

The next portion presents some of the fundamental terms related to the topic of this study, including translation, religious texts translation, and sacred/religious texts. In addition to that, it illustrates some of the related previous studies.

Translation

Translation, as defined by Miremadi (1991), is a reciprocal process from one culture to the other and from other cultures into one culture. In other words, there is a "give-and-take process." In this process, translators deal with some non-equivalent words for which they should find an appropriate equivalent. Nida and Taber (1969) postulate that the translation process comprises two stages: Firstly, finding the closest match of the receptor language term. Secondly, modifying the meaning and the structure of the translated term following the target language sentences' arrangement, pattern, and style. However, upon searching for the intent of the term translation, we can find that researchers unanimously consent about the definition of this term. Catford (1965) defines it as replacing a linguistic element of the original language with a suitable constituent that equalizes it in the target language.

Religious Texts Translation

Williams and Chesterman (2012) claim that religious text translation is a complicated operation that requires a particular procedure and treatment to deal with the unique style and pattern of such a specific intricate structure. Therefore, skillful translators and interpreters are involved to accomplish the translation process concisely and precisely.
Sacred Texts

Alghamdi (2016) defines religious text (sacred text) as "Scriptures and religious texts function as the backbone of religion. They provide structure, clarity, and a means of perpetuating the religion, and enable the rapid proliferation and establishment of the religious beliefs."

Previous Studies

It is of high significance to present some related studies to elaborate on the advantages and disadvantages of religious course translation as an essential component of universities' English syllabi. Based on the fact that the process of teaching translation courses is similar to the Traditional Grammar Method, many scholars and academicians consider translation method as an unfavorable method in learning English. Accordingly, they suggest that translation as an educational tool affects the process of learning English as a Foreign Language negatively rather than enhancing and promoting it.

According to Nida (1964) translators and other practitioners should be aware of the cultural diversity of both source and target languages while conducting translation process. Nida puts that the obtained output of the translation process should reflect the whole cultural aspects of the source text, such as values, ethics, and beliefs; besides that, the receptor texts should portray the nature of the original one pragmatically.

Also, Schumann (1978) has negotiated the cultural dimension as one of the most problematic areas that encounter the translators, when they conduct the process of translation; he argues that "the degree to which a learner acculturates or adapts to L2 native speakers will determine the extent of competence he acquires in L2" (Schumann, 1978, p. 34). Scientists put that "if there is an increase in the social distance then the learner's L2 will be straightforward or results in simplified L2 grammar, sufficient only for communicative success and lacking 'redundant' grammatically relevant properties as morphological inflections (-s, -ing, etc.), function words such as determiners and auxiliaries, (his, that, is, was, etc...), subordinate clauses, (if he goes shopping, or while you are here, etc.). (Schumann, 1978). Nida and Schumann consider the cultural dimension issue as one of the most influential factors that prevent L2 learners from performing the translation process correctly and adequately; therefore, they conclude that English teachers couldn’t rely on the translation as a helpful method in learning English as Foreign Language.

Similarly, Duff (1994) discusses the unsuitability of translation as an effective educational tool in learning English, as he posits the teachers' opposition against using translation in foreign language classes, arguing that translation is a tedious technique due to its invalidity and inefficiently upon employed in the class for the interactive activities and communicative purposes. In this regard, Brown (2002) asserts that from the previous decades till recently, scientists and researchers reckon that using translation as an appropriate method in learning languages is a debatable question. Hence, it is an unfavorable technique in language learning and teaching. Also, Al-Rifa’i’s (2014) recent study reveals that translation activities may result in misconceptions about language learning among students because of the lack of correspondence between two languages.

Abdul-Raof (2004) discusses another dimension by explaining the complicated nature of these texts, as he puts it: The linguistic construction of the Qur'anic texts shows a unique structure where the sentences' elements can be weaved and arranged in different approaches interiorly and exteriorly.
Moreover, Al-Harahsheh (2013) illustrates the difficulties that translators face when they render religious texts from the Arabic language into English, this hardness is attributed to the nature of these texts, as they include the Holy Quran and the Prophetic sayings. In line with Abdul-Raof and Al-Harahsheh, (Hijjo & Kadhim, 2017) concluding that English and Arabic are different syntactically and morphologically. Further argumentations are presented by Almoayidi (2018), as he argues that adopting the method of delivering English language by only English instructions without relying on learners' first language will result in realizing excellent outcomes.

On the contrary, many scientists, academicians, and English instructors, anonymously approve using of the translation in foreign language learning significantly, since this instrument enhances the process of learning English in the universities and colleges. This consensus proves the importance of the translation role in learning English as a Foreign Language, EFL/ESL.

Perkins (1985) clarifies the role of translation by stating that translation is an advantageous technique that leads students to discover similar and different futures and constructions of both their mother tongue and a second language; consequently, contrasting the two languages results in acquiring English as a second language. Currently, there is growing concern about using translation in the learning language in universities classes as an efficient tool and method to enrich students' background and broaden their knowledge of the English language. As a result, teachers can use translation as a beneficial tool in learning English as an L2, since it assists L2 learners to avoid committing errors and mistakes when performing tasks relating to the four learning skills.

Zohrevandi (1992), as an advocate of this approach, posits that "translation does not need to be the ultimate goal of language teaching. Still, it can be a resourceful tool for students to explore grammar, build and activate vocabulary, comprehend reading, and perform listening and speaking activities" (Zohrevandi 1992, pp,181-187).

McDonough (2002) emphasizes the salient function of translation as one of the preferable mechanisms that English teachers exploit for motivating students, besides prompting their learning abilities. Hence, they could exploit it pedagogically in teaching and learning processes. Leonardi (2010) states that translation tasks could include sight translation and interpreting practice. Moreover, if it is appropriately designed, teachers can use translation to enhance the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, to develop accuracy, clarity, and flexibility. Further, Inga Dagilienė (2012), in her paper (Translation as a Learning Method in English Language Teaching) has explained the distinction between futures of translation relevant to the whole texts, including religious texts as instructors can exploit it as effective and vital tools in English learning process, according with her claim: translation is a highly valid medium that realizes exposure to the language in relevant to the whole required learning and interactive activities; accordingly translation usage in the class can be addressed as an advantageous instrument that raises the students' awareness of their learning process generally; as a result, instructors can implement it in the class pedagogically. P. and P. (2012) emphasize that translation "assists student to elude the interference of the mother tongue on the first step and further enhance their L2 learning". Learners are very dependent on their L1 especially at the beginning of learning a second language.

Zeinab, and Talebinejad (2013) conducted a study to explore Iranian students’ use of translation to learn an L2. The results of their research illustrated that the majority of the respondents used translation as a helpful strategy to learn English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL.

Bayram, and Demirbüken (2015) carried out a study to examine Turkish learners' strategies employed by English teachers in the class for learning English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL. The
study's findings showed that EFL students used translation when performing their classes activities, for instance, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Adil (2019) introduces related research focusing on the role of the first mother tongue in enhancing the English learning process as, he concludes that teachers can exploit learners’ mother tongue as an efficient technique for teaching new words' meaning, but the teacher should guarantee that the first language should be used simultaneously with the English as an L2 in the class.

Recently, Alaboud (2022) conducted a study related to the same field to explore the role of translation as an effective and valuable technique that assists students in comprehending English texts properly and meaningfully. Her research revealed the importance of translation as it can be employed to improve students learning skills of English as a Foreign Language.

Research Methodology

In the present study, the researcher adopted descriptive analysis method and a questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The Qualitative method of analysis is employed to explore to what extent the religious course translation helps students to acquire English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL. The researcher used an integrated design of the quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2005) to perform statistical analysis. Then the researcher managed to explain the results relating to the study objectives clearly and adequately.

Instrument and Procedure

For achieving the analysis and explanation purposes, the researcher utilized content analysis method, which is used in social science research for analyzing the data within the domain. According to Holsti (1969), "content analysis is defined as any technique used for making inferences through identifying specified characteristics of messages objectively and systematically." The quantitative approach is based on data collected via an online questionnaire comprising eight items circulated to 62 undergraduate EFL students of level eight. Questionnaire is an efficient method consisting of a series of questions for collecting participants’ feedback. The selected mode is quite suitable for gathering a particular type of data, as the main target of this study is realized by employing this valid research method, since the researcher has used it to explore the significance of including religious course translation in English as a Foreign language syllabus in universities and colleges. The scale of rating is from (1-5), as ‘5’ means (strongly agree), ‘4’ means (agree) while ‘3’ stands for (not sure), ‘2’ means (disagree) whereas ‘1’ stands for (strongly disagree).

Participants

The participants of this study are undergraduate EFL students of level 8 at King Khalid University, Almjardah Campus. Who were taking the Religious Translation Course (Eng3-330) in the first and second semesters during the academic year 2023/2024. The questionnaire included eight 5-point Likert scale items aiming to explore students’ attitudes towards using the Religious Translation Course (Eng3-330) as an effective learning method for learning an L2. Eighty students agreed to participate in this study. However, only 62 of them were able to respond to the survey items.

Data analysis

After the researcher collected the data by using the questionnaire method, then the author analyzed the participants' responses by illustrating the percentages and plotting the graphs that
represent the results of the study. Finally, the researcher scrutinized the findings and then discussed them following the related previous studies.

Findings

The study's findings reveal that religious course translation is necessary for learning English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL. As spiritual courses increase students' exposure to the most vital aspects of the English language, which include:
- knowing the word order arrangement.
- formulating the sentences' structure adequately and correctly.
- Understanding the cultural aspects of the target texts by exploring the hidden meanings that result in acquiring the contextual meanings of various texts.
- Raising the students' knowledge of the English language pattern and style helps them to use the target language successfully for the communication process.
- Conducting translation from Arabic to English language and vice versa in the class provide students an opportunity to engage in speaking and listening activities, such procedures help them to share their concepts and perform their tasks mutually and with their teachers, therefore this will increase their contribution to the courses and reflects on their creativity.

The following part deals with each item separately, followed by an analysis and illustration of the participants responses.

1- Do you think that translation of religious texts, which include (Quranic verses, Hadiths of the prophet, and spiritual topics generally) evolves and improves the students' linguistic background of English as a second language?

Figure 1. The percentages of question number ‘1’

Figure one demonstrates that the researcher asked participants if they believed that translation of religious texts improves their linguistic knowledge of English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL. Results illustrate that more than 93.5% strongly agreed with this notion, 3.25% agreed, whereas 3.25% strongly disagreed. The last category illustrates that a few of the students were insufficiently experienced of the significance of the religious course translation in learning English as a Foreign Language.

2- Are you agree that using the translation of sacred texts helps students to know the culture of English as a second language, when they conducted the translation process from Arabic into English? Accordingly, using the holy translation in learning English results in absorbing the whole content of it as a foreign language.
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Figure 2. The percentages of question number '2'

Figure two reveals that, the researcher asked participants whether they thought that translating the religious texts, including (Quranic verses, Hadiths of the prophet, and general religious texts) from Arabic into English leads to knowing and understanding the various cultural features of English as a foreign language. Results: show that more than 93% strongly agreed that religious text translation helps them to experience the culture and ideology of the English as a receptor language. Thus, this helping mechanism assists them in comprehending and gaining the hidden meanings of the target language, which results in grasping it. Whereas the other categories share a percentage of 1.5, this illustrates that a few of the students agreed, were uncertain, or disagreed. In contrast, the same number of them strongly disagreed about the benefits of these courses.

3- Do you think that the process of finding the appropriate English equivalent when translating religious texts from Arabic into the English language results in acquiring it as an L2?

Figure 3. The percentages of question number '3'

Figure three reveals that the instructor asked respondents whether they believed that searching for the appropriate English equivalent when translating religious texts from Arabic into English assists them in knowing new lexical items and this result in acquiring English as an L2. Results: explain that 93.5% strongly agreed that finding the appropriate equivalent is an advantageous strategy that increases their language input and results in grasping the whole aspects of the English as a foreign language. Agreed and disagreed respondents shared the same percentage, 3.25%.

4- Do you agree that using religious course translation helps L2 learners in understanding the English language morphemes and other linguistic units, such as root words, affixes, etc.) This, consequently resulting in acquiring it as an L2?
Figure 4. The percentages of question number '4'

Figure four illustrates that the researcher asked participants whether they believed that translation of sacred courses from Arabic to English helps in understanding English language morphemes and other linguistic units as root words, and affixes. Consequently, using this method, resulting in acquiring English as a L2. Results: illustrate that 93.5 % strongly agreed, while 5.3% agreed. However, 1.2% strongly disagreed about the mentioned point.

5- Do you agree that religious course translation increases the student knowledge about the rules that govern the grammatical structure of the sentences in the English language?

Figure 5. The percentages of question number '5'

Figure five displays that the instructor inquired respondents if they believed that religious course translation increases their knowledge about the rules that govern the grammatical structure of sentences in the English language, and adopting this tool results in acquiring English as an L2. Results: show that 93.5 % strongly agreed on that point, and 1.4% demonstrated their agreement about this idea.1.6% were uncertain about the mentioned point. In comparison, 3.5% strongly disagreed about the fact that this course will be a beneficial, unique tool that helps them to acquire English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL.

6- Do you think that religious text translation enriches and expands the student's vocabulary?

Figure 6. The percentages of question number '6'
Figure six illustrates that the researcher asked participants if they believed that religious texts translation enriches their English vocabulary, when translating sacred texts from Arabic into English and vice versa. As acquiring any language is built on grasping its basic components such as words and lexis. These components are the key pillars of learning a particular language. Results show that 93.5% strongly agreed, whereas respondents who agreed, were uncertain, or disagreed about this point shared the percentage of 1.5%.

7- Do you agree that students' familiarity with the context of religious text improve their understanding of the English texts meaningfully; thus, students could acquire English as a Foreign Language?

Figure 7. The percentages of question number '7'

Figure seven displays that the researcher asked participants if they believed that familiarity with the context of religious texts (when they translate sacred texts from Arabic into English and vice versa) improve their understanding of English texts' context meaningfully, which results in acquiring English as an L2. Results: demonstrate that 91.9% strongly agreed. In contrast, respondents that agreed or were uncertain about this point shared the percentage of 3.4%, whereas 1.3% strongly disagreed about the significance of the religious translation course as essential subject that assists in polishing their English language as a foreign language.

8- Do you think that translation of religious texts has a vital role in providing exposure to learners in an English language learning environment?

Figure 8. The percentages of question number ‘8’

Figure eight explains that the instructor asked participants whether religious text translation has an essential role in providing exposure to learners in the English language learning environment, and this helps them acquire English as a second language. Results suggest that 91.
9% strongly agreed, 1.5% were insecure about this essential point, whereas respondents who agreed, or disagreed on this point shared the percentage of 3.3% about the importance of this subject in refining their language abilities.

Discussion
This is study focused on revealing the crucial role of the Religious Translation Course ((Eng3-330) as a valuable method in learning English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL. According to the results of figure two, these results support the findings presented in (Nida1964 & Schumann 1978); according, to them, the cultural diversity of both source and target languages is highly significant, and students should put them in their consideration when translating the original text into the target one. Thus, the obtained output of the translation process should reflect the whole cultural aspects of the source text, such as values, ethical issues, and beliefs; besides that, the receptor text should reflect the nature of the original one pragmatically. Results revealed that students' acquaintance with the cultural settings and futures of the English language as receptor text (when they conduct translation from Arabic into English) helps them to choose the most ideal and appropriate English equivalent, which transfers the religious mental image intended by the source text's term that refer to Arabic language. In this context, students need to exert a great effort to find the English equivalent and its cross-culturally connotations corresponding to Arabic word. Searching for English lexical words such as idiomatic expressions and proverbs helps students to obtain new terms; therefore, this resulting in grasping the English as a Foreign Language ELF/ESL. Hence, many scientists have given the cultural aspects of a translated text the highest priority upon conducting the translation process.

In this study, the results of question number 4 correspond with findings conducted by (Hijjo & Kadhim 2017; Harahsheh, 2013; Abdul-Raof 2004). In this regard, Hijjo and Kadhim (2017) have put one of the basic rules that is considered as a bedrock for solving the linguistic problem relevant to the sentence structure when translating Arabic texts (Source Text) into English texts (Target Text). They conclude that English and Arabic languages are different syntactically and morphologically. Accordingly, languages in common have various linguistic systems and sentence constructions; as a result, translation students and other practitioners who conduct religious translation may face many linguistic and stylistic problems. Thus, they should account the word order arrangement rule as the nucleus of the sentence's structure. Understanding and applying the mentioned rule relating to the word order arrangement by L2 learners is very essential since it helps them to produce correct English sentences when they practice their four language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

In addition to that, by comparing the religious translation with other types of translations, Al-Harahsheh (2013) explains the difficulties that translators face when they render religious texts from the Arabic language into their English counterpart equivalents, attributing this complexity to the nature of these texts, as this translation concerns with specific sensitive sacred topics including the Holy Quran and the Prophetic sayings. In this regard, Abdul-Raof (2004) also gives more detail about the nature of these complicated texts. Accordingly, to overcome this complexity, students should be equipped with the required knowledge of the English language as a target language, such as vocabulary, morphemes, and syntactic structures, to perform the translation process adequately. Students' regular practice of the translation process from Arabic into English language and vice versa, resulting in familiarity with the English lexical items that enhancing their learning of English as a
Foreign Language, as they could use the English terms successfully for various communication purposes. Results of figures two and three support the findings presented in (Al-Harahsheh, 2013& Abdul-Raof 2004)

Similar to many other research and studies (Perkins,1985& Zohrevandi, 1992; McDonough ,2002; Leonardi, 2010;Pan & Pan, 2012; Zeinab & Talebinejad,2013; Bayram & Demirbükên,2015; Samardali & Ismael,2017; Adil,2019; Alaboud,2022);this, study illustrates that the majority of EFL/ESL learners in Al-Majardah College at KKU have positive attitudes toward the effectiveness and validity of the religious course translation as an essential method that helps them to understand some aspects of English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL, such as correct word order, sentences structures, new items of vocabulary, cultural issues. The researcher observed that the findings and results of this study are similar to those described above in the literature review considerably.

Conclusion

The present study is carried out to explore the significant role of religious course translation as a vital part that enhance the syllabus of English as a Foreign Language EFL/ESL in universities and colleges. Being a helpful tool and pivotal method that assists learners in achieving many learning objectives and outcomes, teachers use religious course translation for enhancing the process of learning English as an L2. Although, some critics consider using translation is an invalid method in learning English language. However, researchers and academicians generally postulate that using translation in English class is a vital technique that resulting in helping students acquire their fundamental four skills in different learning stages. Ross (2000) confirms that the language community regards translation a very beneficial method and accounted as the fifth skill. Teachers can employ it socially for the communicative purposes in foreign language teaching. Ross's point is about the domain in general, obviously the spiritual texts' translation, which represents a considerable part of this field and is the focus of the present paper. The data analysis and findings prove that sacred course translation can be implemented and employed as a unique tool and an effective strategy for polishing students' English by enriching their vocabulary and boosting their learning skills. Moreover, The findings show that the majority of respondents agree with the effectiveness of the spiritual course translation in promoting their English learning process, considering the following aspects: understanding English word order arrangements, knowing the formation of sentences structures by comparing them to Arabic ones, enhancing their knowledge about English by having more exposure to English culture, genre and style, facilitating robust environment for interaction and participation, as learners can engage in different oral/aural, and writing activities in the class, all these gained benefits result in developing students' communication and speaking skills. Consequently, when students translate sacred texts from Arabic into English and vice versa, this process assists them in improving and developing their learning of the English language, that resulting in English acquisition. Pedagogically, the researcher has recommended that instructors who teach EFL/ESL should expose their learners to the spiritual courses intensively, regularly, and comprehensively, as it will be a highly beneficial learning strategy.

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