

Ukrainian Translations of the Meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān: Problems and Prospects

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The present study is devoted to the analysis of the so far only partial translations of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān into the Ukrainian language. Special attention is paid to the features of Ukrainian, its historical perspective and its potential for representing the meaning and message of the Glorious Qur'ān. The results of this research would hopefully be of help for future translations. Despite the particularly close relation of this article to the problems of Ukrainian, some important principles of translation, based on traditional Islamic exegetic sources which are included in the study, may prove useful for the translators of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān into other European languages as well.

Introduction

The history of the European tradition of the study of Islam is so long-standing that it would amount to stating the obvious in writing now about such a problem as the history of a native language and its influence on the translation of the Glorious Qur'ān into this language. However, the development of the youngest European languages – such as Ukrainian – has given rise to some unusual problems which should be taken into consideration before undertaking translation. They do not concern the Glorious Qur'ān or Arabic only; these problems are more related to grammar, syntax, lexical tools and semiotic features of the language per se. Defining translation basically as “interpreting the meaning of a text in one language (the “source text”) and producing it in another language (the “target text”)”, we may explain it, in other words, as the “representation of the original text and its structure in terms of different thinking”¹. The language if attributed of such thinking is a mental-based phenomenon which

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¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation>, 8.08.2007.

includes all aspects of cultural, social and even political contexts. The latter is particularly true of Ukrainian, a language with a long and complicated history. Being under the rule of other countries, Ukraine managed to establish, and successfully develop, an original culture with its own language. However, powerful Russian influence and long years of subjugation of the people of Ukraine made it virtually impossible to develop the Ukrainian language as an effective means of explication of cultural points in science and other important domains of social life. As a result, some spheres of the Ukrainian language have not been highly developed until now¹. Despite the vast vocabulary built from the folk language of 18th–20th centuries, the Ukrainian language has different structures, borrowed from other languages such as Old Slavonic, Latin, Polish and, especially, Russian.

One of these spheres is religious terminology, a prerequisite in the translation of the Glorious Qur'ān. This important point will form one of the subjects of analysis in this article. The in-depth study of language problems could well be seen as an issue of understanding because of its relation to such issues as reading one culture in terms of another by adequately interpreting the text (The Glorious Qur'ān). To put it in perspective such an undertaking should be preceded by an analysis of the so far only partial translations of the Glorious Qur'ān into Ukrainian, and, especially, by a short account of history of Islam Ukrainian soil. The main part of the analysis, nonetheless, is focused on the history and essence of Ukrainian.

The Ukrainian language and its development

Ukrainian is one of the Eastern Slavonic languages closely related to Belarusian, Polish and Russian. This language originated in the eighth or ninth century with its history stretching back to the Old-Slavonic language. Despite convincing evidence of the existence of

¹ A significant attempt to fill this gap has been done in the first half of 20th century during the independent Ukrainian state (1918-1921) and times of Sovietic "ukrainization" in Ukraine, when The Ukrainian Grammar ("Ukrains'kyi pravopys") was published (1929). Also some textbooks were published by the famous Ukrainian scholar Ivan Ohienko in the Western Ukrainian lands which were occupied by Poland. See: Rusanivs'kyi M. *Istoriya Ukrains'koi literaturnoi movy* [*The History of Ukrainian Literary Language*], pp. 300-303, pp. 352-354 (Kyiv: ArTek, 2002).

Old Kyivan Rus'¹ scriptures² before the mission of Kirill and Methody in the tenth century, the development of written language has been influenced and determined by the Byzantine Christian tradition. This language was similar to the Bulgarian and Macedonian dialects³. Since the Middle Age, Old Slavonic has been transformed and even some sounds have been lost. The most representative sources for studying this language are Christian texts, as for example the translation of the Bible and other liturgical texts. It should be mentioned that manuscripts of these translations were changed depending on the interpretation. For example, before the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the majority of Greek religious terms from the Gospel were translated into the local language⁴. Basic changes took place in a later period (15th and 16th centuries), when the then nascent "old Ukrainian literary language" was first officially used⁵. The rise of the Ukrainian literature at that time was marked by the influence of the folk language. The latter differs from the written language⁶. Despite this difference, the main grammar treatise of 18th century Slavonic language, written by Meletiy Smotryc'kyi (graduate of the famous Ostroh Academy and some other European universities), includes some kind of Ukrainian folk accentuation⁷.

After 1654, the year of the Pact between Ukrainian *kozaks* lead by Bohdan Khmelnickiy, and the Russian Tsar, the left side of Ukraine was "mentally occupied" and a well-developed Russian written

¹ It should be noted that Kyivan Rus' (*bilād ar-rūs* or *ar-rūsīyyah* mentioned by such Arabic historians as ibn Faḍlān, ibn Miskawayh and ibn Yaḳūb, see: James E. Montgomery. *Ibn Faḍlān and the Rusīyyah* // Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies, 3 (2000), pp. 1-25) should not be confused with Russia (before the XVI-XVII centuries it was named as Moskovia – "Moscow land") that was situated in the northeast part of the great Slavic country with its centre in Kyiv.

² For example, in "Fihrist" by ibn an-Nadīm: *Kitāb al-Fihrist li-n-Nadīm*, p. 22. (Tehran: W. P., 1975).

³ Ohienko I. *Istoriya Ukraїns'koi literaturnoi movy* [The History of Ukrainian Literary Language], part II (Kyiv: Nasha Kul'tura i nauka, 2001).

⁴ Rusaniv's'kyi M. Ibid, p. 16

⁵ Tkachenko O. *Ukraїns'ka mova i movne zytta svitu* [Ukrainian Language and World Languages], p. 35 (Kyiv: Spalakh, 2004).

⁶ *Ukraїns'ka literatura XIV-XVI st* [XIV-XVI centuries Ukrainian literature] // Ed. Mykytas' V., p. 6 (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1988).

⁷ *Grammatiki slavenskiya pravilnoe sintagma*. Vilno, 1619.

language started to drive out Old Ukrainian literary language: "Russian and Polish had deep national roots when the Ukrainian written language did not."¹ So, modernized Old Slavonic remained as the language of the Orthodox Church. The folk language became the language of religion only after the Reformation, when Protestantism came to Ukraine. Such conditions gave way to the Modern Ukrainian Literary Language; folk language was its main source. This language appeared in 18th and 19th centuries and was developed into classic Ukrainian literature by Ivan Kotliarevskiy (1769-1838), Grygorii Kvitka-Osnovianenko (1778-1843), Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) and others. The corpus of Ukrainian literature formed a strong basis for Modern Ukrainian Literary Language and its development has continued up to this day. Despite suppression during the Soviet regime (1922-1991), Ukrainian written language flourished but its vocabulary changed. The only source of scientific terminology was Russian, while the language of the Orthodox Church was Russified at an earlier date, in 1720 by Peter I.

The results of three centuries of Russification policy still remain significant. Revival and development of the native language in Independent Ukraine are determined also by translation from other languages which represents a huge potential for the Ukrainian language and its lexicon.

Islam in Ukraine

Let us turn attention to the history of Ukrainian Islam and, particularly, its linguistic perspective. The translation of the Qur'an and also other Islamic texts from Arabic is not a mere translation activity. This process involves some kind of the usage of special sacred lexicon, recognized by Muslims as a strong system for life and beliefs. The relevant Ukrainian words should gradually take on "Islamic meanings" and this system of understanding should be open to other persons as a way of *daw'ah*. Unfortunately, such a perception is hardly met in Ukrainian Islam. The following is an overview of the history of Islam in the region. This topic will help also in understanding some problems of translation.

According to historical data, the first Muslims came to the Crimean peninsula in 7th century, not so long after the victory of Islam in

¹ Tkachenko, O. Ibid, p. 38.

Arabia¹. Some evidence about the existence of Islam in the Ukrainian territory among the Alanian tribes could be traced back to the 8th century. They used to bury the dead according to the Islamic funeral practice². It is worth-mentioning here that Kyivan Rus' had close trade connections with the Islamic world and even the famous Kyivan ruler, Volodymyr the Great was interested in Islam³. This is illustrated not only by the legend about "the choice of faith", but also by the geography of trade routes. According to the historian, ibn Hordadbeg, merchants from Rus' would visit southern Caspian cities and go from this region even to Baghdad. There are several other examples of close connections between Rus' and the Islamic world⁴.

Further expansion of Islam onto Ukrainian lands is closely connected with the history of Crimea. In 1262 the first mosque, on record, was built. Crimean Khanate was formed before the 14th century. This Islamic State established close relations with other parts of the Islamic world (for example, with Egypt, where Crimean scholars studied). According to historical data, the most widespread *madhāhib* were the schools of Imams ash-Shāfi'ī and Abū Ḥanīfah. The basics of *fiqh* and other *sharī'ah* sciences were studied in large Islamic indigenous schools. On this count the special role of "Solhat Academy"⁵ is worthy of mention. Tartars had their own language and also Turkish whereas Arabic as the language of the Qur'ān, Sunnah and scientific research was widely used.

¹ According to legend, they were Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), known here as Gazi Mansur and Malik Ashter: Jackubovych M. *Islam w Ukraini [Islam in Ukraine]* // Korotkyi Ilustrovanyi putivnyk dlia rozuminnia Islamu, p. 81. (Alexandria: CIMS, 2006).

² *Istoria religii v Ukraini [The history of religions in Ukraine]* // Ed. Kolodnyi A., Jarocky P., p. 465 (Kyiv: Znannia, 1999).

³ Kraliuk, Petro. *Chy mig Kniaz Volodymyr zrobyty Rus' musulmans'koju?* [Was it possible for Prince Volodymyr to make Rus' Islamic?] // *Kyivska Rus'*. – Knyga 9 (XVIII). – pp. 109-120.

⁴ See Grushevskiy M. *Istoriya Ukrainy-Rusy [The history of the Rus'-Ukraine]*, Vol. 1, ch. V (Kyiv: Znannia, 1994); Cipko A. *Ukraina i Blyz'kyi Shid [Ukraine and the Middle East]* // *Ukraina i Shid: panorama kul'turno-istorychnyh vzaemyu*, pp. 51-57 (Kyiv: Ukrain's'ka vydavnycha spilka, 2001).

⁵ Boicova O., Kyriushko M. *Islam v Krymu: religino-nacional'na samoidentyfikaciya kryms'ko-tatars'kogo narodu [Religious and national self-identification of Crimean Tartar people]*, p. 45. (Kyiv: Svitogiad, 2005).

The fourteenth century opened a new chapter of Islamic history in Ukraine. This era is characterized by the integration of Muslims into Ukrainian ethnic territory proper. In 1350, the Lithuanian *kniaz* (ruler) invited Tartar warriors to join his military force. The number of Tartars was so large that in 1591 their population was approximately 100,000 and they had near 400 mosques in Western Ukraine, Poland and Belarus¹. Tartars formed isolated communities near local castles². In this context we should note the cultural discourse of Ukrainian Tartars and pay special attention to the “*kitabs*” (from Turkish transliteration of Arabic word *kitāb* – “book”). These books were written in the Old Belarusian language, which is very similar to old Ukrainian literary language. The only difference lies in the Arabic script used in the language of *kitabs*. During the 15th and 16th centuries, authors used Arabic script and wrote *tafāsīr* with Qur'an translation into local languages³. Tartars were assimilated and they forsook their language for Belarusian, Ukrainian and Polish. In such books some Arabic words were left untranslated, but transformed according to Slavic pronunciation (*du'ā* was changed to *duaika*, *kāfir* became a source for the Belarusian plural *kafiry* and adjective *kafirski* (arab. *kufri*) and so on)⁴. One of the most advanced studies of these books was carried out by the Belarusian scholar, J. Stankevich⁵. These books and the proposed variants of translation served as a solid basis for the development of the Ukrainian translation of the Glorious Qur'an. Yet there were two obstacles. First, not all books were studied and published. Secondly, modern Ukrainian is markedly different from the written language of 17th and 18th centuries. However, the vocabulary of *kitabs* could be used as comparative material for the

¹ Krynicki, Yurii. *Islam // Religija i carkva na Bialarusi: Encyklopedychny davednik [Religion and Church in Belarus: An Encyclopedia]*, p. 133 (Minsk: BelEn, 2001).

² Jackubovych M. *Iz istorii Islama v Ukrainie: Ostroh [From the History of Islam in Ukraine: Ostroh] // Kalimah newspaper, No. 3 (2007), p. 3.*

³ Nesciarovich V. *Kitaby [Kitabs] // Religija i carkva na Bialarusi: Encyklopedychny davednik [Religion and Church in Belarus: An Encyclopedia]*, p. 161 (Minsk: BelEn, 2001).

⁴ Nesciarovich V. *Kitaby – Unikal'naja zjava u bielaruskaj move [Kitabs. An Unical phenomena in Bielorussian language]*. http://www.pravapis.org/art_kitab1.asp, 9.08.2007.

⁵ Stankevich J. *Mova rukapisu Al Kitab [The language of the Manuscript Al Kitab]*. – Vol. I, II. (New York: Kryvickaje Navukovaje Tavaristva Francisa Skariny, 1950).

translation of Islamic Arabic texts into Ukrainian, Belarusian and Polish. Yet, there are some other possible sources besides these books for the translation of Arabic religious terms with purely Islamic meaning, which were understandable for the Ukrainian mind. Reference is to some early (15th century) partial translations of Abu Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's "Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah", known here as "Kyivs'ka logika" ("Kyivan Logic") and the book "Sirr al-Asrār", eventually ascribed to Aristotle. But these translations were indirectly done from Hebrew translations and not from Arabic originals¹.

It is hard to explain more definitely the language of Ukrainian Tartars who lived in Western Ukraine in the 19th century. According to some, the majority remained Muslims, but as for their language and some other important cultural elements, they were fully integrated into the local population. There is no data regarding the translation of the Glorious Qur'an or *aḥādīth* into the Ukrainian language, or even of some attempts in this field.

Early attempts to translate the Glorious Qur'an into Ukrainian

Perhaps Ukraine is the only large country in Europe that does not have, as yet, a complete translation of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an. Unlike Polish², Ukrainian was not widely used by the local Muslim minorities. However, some progress in Qur'anic studies was made by Orientalists. Lviv was the most important centre of Orientalism in western Ukraine and the local university devoted efforts to Arabic studies. But the first translation of the Glorious Qur'an was done indirectly from a European language and not from the original Arabic text³. The author, a Ukrainian scientist Olexandr Abranchak-Lysynec'kyi⁴, published it (using Latin, not Cyrillic script) in Lviv in 1913⁵. However, after the first edition, this translation was not reprinted or revised. It is a very rare source now. A small part

¹ Grushevskiy M. *Istoriya Ukrainis'koi literatury* [*The History of Ukrainian Literature*], Vol. 5, pp. 93-94 (Kyiv: Lybid', 1995).

² The first Polish Muslim translation of the Glorious Qur'an was published in 19th century (Warsaw, 1858). It was done by the Tartarian Jam Murza Buchacky.

³ See Kyriushko M. *Islam u konteksti nacional'nogo vidrozdennia tiurkomovnyh narodiv* [Islam in the context of the Turks national revival] // *Nacional'ne vidrozdennia i religiya*, pp. 190-203 (Kyiv: Asociaciya "Ukraina", 1995).

⁴ He worked on this translation along with his colleague V. Lezevych.

⁵ Cipko, Anatolij. *Ibid*, p. 102.

from this text was published by O. Dziuban and J. Polotniuk in an article about Arabic studies in Lviv¹. Likewise, the translation by Abranchak-Lysynec'kyi is a very rare edition and was unavailable to the author of this article. Here we analyze the translation of *sūrah* al-Fāṭiḥah from this translation and point out some of the peculiarities of its language. An in-depth exploration of this work should, however, be preceded by an overview of the whole of translation.

At first, the translator recognizes *basmalah* as a separate part of Qur'anic text and not as a first *āyah* of al-Fāṭiḥah as it is fixed in the present Cairo edition and traditional *Āṣim* mode of Qur'anic reading². Besides this, he divides the seventh *āyah* into two parts. It seems that the author used a translation based on the so-called "Critical Edition" of the Glorious Qur'an by the German orientalist Gustav Flügel (Leipzig, 1834). In the first (i.e. second in the Cairo edition) *āyah* he refers to *al-ḥamdu Lillāhi* as to "*slava Allahovi*" ("Glory to Allah"). But Ukrainian word "*slava*" is more appropriate to the Arabic *subḥāna* (as in *subḥāna Allah*), so the better variant is a "*hvala*" (i.e. "praise")³. This latter variant is used in the partial translation of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an by Valerii Rybalkin⁴, but in another modern partial translation (by J. Polotniuk⁵) the noun "*slava*" still appears. *Rabb al-ʿālamīn* is translated by Abranchak-Lusynec'ki as "*pan svitiv*" ("Lord of the worlds"). The word "*pan*" refers to the *rabb* and it seems to be a polonised term⁶. Polish influence may be found in the second (or third) *āyah*, in which the Arabic word *mālik* is translated as "*Korol*"⁷ ("King"). The rendering of the third (or fourth) *āyahs*

¹ Dziuban O., Polotniuk J. *Z arabs'koi u Lvovi* [Arabic language in Lviv] // Zovten', 1967, No. 3, pp. 134-135.

² For exegetic discussion on the relation of *basmalah* to *sūrat* al-Fāṭiḥah, see ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm*, Vol. 1, pp. 153-154 (al-Qāhirah: Mu'assasat Qurṭubah, 1421/2000).

³ For example, as in the widely-used phrase "Praise be to Allah"

⁴ *Koran. Doslidzennia, pereklad (Fragment) ta komentari V. S. Rybalkina* [Qur'an. Study, translation (partial) and comments by V. S. Rybalkin] (Kyiv: Stylos, 2002).

⁵ *Koran. Pereklav z arabs'koi Yarema Polotniuk* [Qur'an. Translated from Arabic by Yarema Polotniuk] // Vsesvit, No. 6, 1990, pp. 90-129.

⁶ It could be illustrated by comparison with the Polish translation by Jozef Bielawski (Warszawa: Panstwowi Instytut Wydawniczy, 2007) in which the translator uses the Polish *pan* for the Arabic *rabb*.

⁷ For example, both the Polish translations use "*król*" ("King") that is similar to

includes a descriptive meaning of the Arabic verb *'abada* ("sluzhyty" – "to serve").

Notwithstanding the above mentioned instances of incongruency, which do not significantly change the true meaning of the text, the translation of *sūrah* al-Fātiḥah, by Abranchak-Lysynec'kyi, may be rated as appropriate. It has a dynamic style and was understandable to Ukrainian readers of the first half of the 20th century. Contemporary translations should employ a modernized language, and more importantly, be faithful to the Arabic text. Standard *tafāsīr* should be used. However, the analysis of Abranchak-Lysynec'kyi's translation would throw further light on the development of Ukrainian Islamic Studies.

Modern Ukrainian translations of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān

Another partial translation of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān is by the well-known Ukrainian Orientalist, Professor Yarema Polotniuk (b. 1935). This work, based on the Cairo edition of the Glorious Qur'ān¹, includes translated texts of Makkan *sūrahs*, numbered according to the original. Besides the actual translation, the work includes an introduction to the Qur'ān and the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) titled, *A Sacred Book of Islam*². Brief remarks with some explanations are also appended. These comments are devoted mainly to *asbāb an-nuzūl* (circumstantial settings of the revelation) on the authority of Muslim commentators. Among them only Zamakhsharī is mentioned by name; probably this absence of Arabic names may be on account of the Ukrainians' unfamiliarity with them. Besides, the comments include references to the works by the famous Orientalists: Agathangel, Kryms'kyi and Ignatii Krachkovskii³. It falls beyond the scope of this paper to provide a critical study of the whole of

Ukrainian "*korol*". Such Polish forms in translation are representative of the main features of Ukrainian in Western Ukraine during the first half of 20th century (before the Soviet occupation in 1939).

¹ Koran. *Pereklav z arabs'koi Yarema Polotniuk* [The Qur'an. Translated from Arabic by Yarema Polotniuk] // Vsesvit, No. 6, 1990, p. 129.

² Ibid, p. 124-129.

³ For example, his Russian translation of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān, first published in Moscow at 1963 (with comments).

Polotniuk's translation. However, we may bring into light some distinctive features of his work and draw some general conclusions.

As for the method of translation, it seems that Polotniuk used the "dynamic equivalence" translation method, which has been defined in translation studies as "the closes natural equivalent to the source language message"¹. In this way, the translator tried to represent the "spirit of the Qur'ān", developing a rhetorical structure of his work being adapted to the paradigm of Ukrainian thinking pattern. It may be illustrated by some examples of metaphors, idiom and usage in his translation as well as by some other devices. For instance, the translator employs the Ukrainian "Boh" ("God") besides the traditional Islamic *Allah*². The possibility of using "God" beside *Allah* is under discussion among Orientalists as to this time³. Secondly, the translator sometimes departs from the original opting for a more artistic and aesthetic structure, *rabb al-ʿālamīn* is translated as "*Gospod' vsiogo suschogo*" ("The God of all existent")⁴, *innakum lafi qawḷ-in mukhtalif*⁵ as "*voistynnu, vy marnuiete chas na superechky ta suieslīvia*" ("you waste the time for controversy and foolish words"), *inna l-muttaqīna fi jannāt-in* as "*bogoboiazyvi rozkoshuvatymut' u rais'kyh kushchah*" ("The God-conscious will enjoy the gardens of Paradise"). The most striking rendition appears in the translation of the *sūrat al-Balad*: the first two *āyahs* (*lā uqsimu bi-hādhā l-balad, wa anta ḥillun bi-hādhā l-balad*) are translated as "*Ne klianusia Ya tsym mistom! Bo ty, proroche, tut bezzakhysnyi*" ("I do not swear by this town! Because you are helpless here, O, Prophet!"). Constraints of space forbid us from drawing attention to all such rhetorical figures which are loosely translated, even at the expense of changing the literal sense of the Glorious Qur'ān, and loading it

¹ Nida, Eugene A. *Toward a Science of Translating*, pp. 165-166 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964).

² The names of the Prophets (peace be upon them), however, appear as they are in Muslim tradition.

³ For example, the discussion between Russian Arabists S. Prozorov and T. Ibrahim: *Allah ili Boh? Diskussiia S. M. Prozorova i Tawfika Kemala Ibrahima [Allah or God? A discussion by S. M. Prozorov and Tawfiq Kamal Ibrahim]* // *Minaret* №1, (008), March, 2006, pp. 8-15.

⁴ It should be noted that in another place (*Sūrat at-Takwīr*, 81:29) *rabb al-ʿālamīn* is translated by Polotniuk as "*Volodar sviiv*" ("The Owner of the Worlds").

⁵ *Sūrat adh-Dhāriyāt*, 51:8

with a Biblical style. Let us mention some peculiarities of the language of Polotniuk's translation.

It seems that the translator tried to utilize all possible devices available to the Ukrainian language to facilitate the understanding process for the local readers of the Qur'an. He used a wide base of expressions, and some of them are rare in the Ukrainian literature and even close to the spoken variant (for instance, "provozvistnyk" (*nadhīr*), "zanapastyv" (*ahlak*), "zbyvaie na manivtsi" (*yuḍillu Llahu man yashā'*), "zamiry" (*kaida*) etc.). For example, the noun *zamir* (pl. *zamiry* ("intentions")) could be replaced by more widespread variant *namiry* or *zadumy*¹ or even replaced by another word. In Polotniuk's translation some Ukrainian words are different, depending on the context of the Arabic original, so one *lafz* could be rendered through two or more Ukrainian variants. But in Islamic Studies research (for example, when quotation from the translation of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an is necessary) such "dynamic style" of translation is not appropriate in Qur'an translation because it jeopardizes the meaning of the *āyah*. Despite such peculiarities, Polotniuk's translation should be appreciated for its style and artistic structure, successfully adapted to the Ukrainian language. However, some of his vocabulary appears as non-representative in the context of modern Ukrainian language; some words seem to be connected with the spoken and even dialectal variants because of their rare usage. It should also be noted that Polotniuk tends to use some archaisms². Anyway, every translation should be more anchored in the Arabic Qur'an, rather than in the translator's own comments or local cultural context. The original text should be represented in terms of another culture, but every *āyah* should preserve the original meaning. Such attempt has been made in the academic, though partial translation of the Ukrainian Arabist, Valerii Rybalkin (b. 1952)³. This translation was published in 2002 and approved for

¹ These words marked as synonyms in the modern Ukrainian lexicon: *Zamir / Novyi tlumachnyi slovnyk Ukrain'skoi mowy* [The Modern Ukrainian Glossary] // Ed. Vasyl Yaremenko, Oksana Slipushko, Vol. 1, p. 710 (Kyiv: Akonit, 2006).

² The Polish translator, J. Bielawsky faced similar problems in Polish and wrote that he opposed archaism. See: *Koran. Z Arabskiego przelozył i komentarzhem opatrzył Josef Bielawski* [Qur'an. Translation from Arabic and comments by Joseph Bielawski], p. 831 (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2007).

³ *Koran. Doslidzennia, pereklad (fragment) ta komentari V. S. Rybalkina* [The Qur'an. Study, translation (partial) and comments by V. S. Rybalkin] (Kyiv: Stylos, 2002).

publishing by the Science Council of Ukrainian Institute of Eastern Studies¹. This edition includes a long list of classical Islamic sources (lexicons and *tafsīr*) as well as scientific textbooks. The translation is based on the original Arabic text and the first five *sūrah*s are translated (al-Fātiḥah to an-Nisā') along with comments. The history of Qur'an codification, general overview of the *sīrah*, brief information about the development of Islam and special review of exegetical works form part of the extensive preface².

A large portion of this work is devoted to traditional commentaries as a powerful source of understanding the Qur'anic text. The translation is full of interpolations, mostly from the *tafsīr* of al-Jalālayn that may be branded as the main source for translator's explanatory notes. Generally, the method of translation is very similar to the one in the Russian translation by M.-N. Osmanov³. For example, identical language constructions are used: *khairu al-mākīrīn* (al-ʿImrān 3:54) is translated as “*naidoskonalishyi iz khytruniv*” (“the perfect from the planners”) the same as in Osmanov's translation. The whole work is illustrative of the Russian Orientalist tradition. For instance, Rybalkin often quotes Russian Arabists: M.-N. Osmanov, I. Krachkovski and M. Piotrovski. He also uses some Russian words in his explanation as comparative variants for the Ukrainian translation of the Arabic original⁴.

The translator's comments concern mostly the linguistic aspect of the Glorious Qur'an and also offer some historical explanations. Some parallels between the Qur'an and Bible are noted. The translator has retained the form “Allah” and the Qur'anic names of the Prophets (peace be upon them). We should also mention some variants in the translation of recurrent expressions in the Qur'an, such as *inna* (“Verily”), *ahl al-Kitāb* (“People of the Book”), *al-muttaqūn* (“God-conscious”), *ākhirā* (“The Hereafter”) and derivatives of the verb *nazala* (“To send down”) are translated by Rybalkin in a special way. *Inna* is

¹ According to the text on the subtitle page.

² Ibid, pp. 3-97.

³ See, for example, the second edition, reprinted without changes in Iran: *Koran / Perevod i kommentarii M.N. O. Osmanova* [The Qur'an / Translation and comments by M.-N. O. Osmanov] (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 1421/2000). Osmanov's translation was the first Russian translation in which traditional Islamic commentaries were widely used.

⁴ See *Koran*, p. 105, fn. 43.

rendered as “*dostemnenno*” (“Really”, “truly”). Such variants have their origin in the folk language of 19th century besides the more widespread religious word “*voistynu*” (or “*istynno*”)¹, used in the Church as well as in literary language, derived from the Old Slavonic root “*istyna*” (“The Truth”; the closest Arabic word is *al-ḥaqq*). The expression *ahl al-Kitāb* is overloaded with interpolation and, as a result, is translated as “*liudy [Sviatogo] Pys'ma*” (“People of the [Holy] Scripture”). So, such interpolation ([Holy]) appear throughout the whole text of this partial translation. The noun “*pys'mo*” also means “script” and a similar variant “*pysannia*” is used, for example, in reference to ecclesiastic texts. It should be noted that at other places Rybalkin translates *kitāb* as a “Knyga”, i.e. “Book”². Also at the beginning of *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2:2) the translator employs the word “*blagochestyvi*” (“Pious”) for the Arabic *al-muttaqūn*. It seems to be that the more appropriate variant is “*bogoboyazlyvi*” (“God-conscious”) because of its literal meaning and it being equivalent to the root *ta-qa-ya* (“to fear”, “to be mindful of”)³. Such features may be also found in some parts of Osmanov’s Russian translation⁴. Some peculiarities are also present in the usage of the word “*ākhirah*”. It is referred to as “*pryideshnie*”⁵ (“that will come”) and “*inshe*”⁶ (“other”).

The absence of the exact equivalent of the noun *nazzala* in Ukrainian is compelling translators to use some similar variants as “*posylaty*” (“to send”) that has been used by Rybalkin in his translation of *al-Baqarah*, 2:4, and at some other places⁷. Also he uses derivatives of the verb “*zvodyty*”⁸ (*an-Nisā'*, 4:153).

¹ This variant is used by J. Polontiuk

² For example, in *sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2:2.

³ Lane, Edward William. *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 309, 310 (Beirut: Librarie du Liban, 1968).

⁴ See, for example, *sūrat az-Zumar*, 39:33. But at some other places (as in *al-Baqarah*, 2:177) he uses proper “*bogoboyaznennye*” for “*muttaqūn*”, reserving “*blagochestie*” (“piety”) for the Arabic word “*barr*”.

⁵ *āl-Imrān*, 3:56

⁶ *Al-Baqarah*, 2:4.

⁷ To my mind, it is better to use “*vidsylaty*” or “*zsylyaty*” (“*zislane*” (“sent” as passive form) as an equivalent to Arabic *tanzīl*). This variant has a religious meaning and could be translated into English as “to send down [from God]”.

⁸ It means “to shift down” but could be very hard to interpret in the sense of Revelation from God

An important side of translation is “*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*”, i.e. the Most Beautiful Names of Allah Almighty. It is an old European tradition to use a prefix “All-” in the translation of such names (“All-Compassionate”, “All-Merciful”, etc.). But this could prove to be confusing. Is it possible to translate *al-ʿAfw* and *al-Ghafūr* as “All-Forgiving”¹, while it is clearly stated in the Qurʾān that Allah does not forgive polytheism?² Anyway, the translation of *al-ʿAfw* and *al-Ghafūr* as “All-Forgiving” underscores the importance of repentance (*tawbah*)³.

Also we should note here some glaring mistakes in Rybalkin’s comments on the text. For example, his footnote on verse 29 of *sūrah al-Baqarah* (in which the seven heavens are mentioned) carries the following explanation: “The Muslim theory of the seven heavens is connected with Ptolemaeus’ theory of the seven spheres”⁴. It might be thought from this allusion that Ptolemaeus influenced the Qurʾānic text by his scientific theory, which is not the historical truth⁵.

Generally, this “academic” translation by Rybalkin stands out as a very fundamental work not only in its use of traditional sources, but also in view of its attention to the text of the Glorious Qurʾān. Despite betraying a marked influence of the Russian tradition of translating and even using some Russified words, this translation is closer to the original than the translation by Polotniuk. However, the vocabulary of the translation is not consistent and several variants are used in the same context. Some variants seem⁶ to be very much out of place and not suitable for the translation of the Sacred Text.

It should be noted also that in some way the two modern Ukrainian

¹ As Rybalkin does in an-Nisā’, 4:149, 152.

² An-Nisā’, 4:48.

³ As it has been noted by commentators. See, for example, “*Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib*” by al-Fakhr ar-Rāzī, Vol, 10, pp. 128-130 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1401/1981).

⁴ *Koran. Doslidzennia...* [The Qurʾān. Study...], p. 105, fn. 47.

⁵ This issue is not the object of our present research, but, by way of proving the fallacy of the translator’s assumption in passing, it should be noted that the idea about the seven heavens (seven spheres) was known in the East since the old times of Mesopotamia. See: Klymyshyn, Ivan. *Astronomia: Vchera i segodnia* [Astronomy: Yesterday and Today], pp. 15-16 (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1977).

⁶ Some expressions like “*plesty intrygy*”, “*pryity do tiany*”, “*obgortka*”, “*nakyvaty piatamy*” etc. are over simplified and reduce the original meanings to the common folk speech.

translations by Y. Polotniuk and V. Rybalkin are products of the system of Orientalist Ukrainian Islamic Studies. It is commonly known that the long years of Soviet occupation adversely affected some fields of academic research in Ukraine. But Arabic and Islamic Studies continued to develop and we may mention some specialists in this field such as O. Kovalevsky from Kharkiv. The scientific research of his time was mainly devoted to history and philology. Now Islamic Studies in Ukraine are limited to linguistics and special departments of the universities are mainly oriented to language, financial and law studies. As a result, great attention is paid to Eastern languages studies, while history especially, the history of religion, culture and philosophy are neglected subjects of local Islamic Studies. So, the published partial translations of the Glorious Qur'an are mainly restricted to language aspects of analysis, whereas this field should at best be a tool of understanding.

Understanding the Qur'an through its Ukrainian translation

As has been demonstrated, one of the main problems of the translation process is the possibility, or otherwise, to use some Ukrainian words in the religious parlance. The Ukrainian lexicon may be divided into two parts: the passive domain of the language, not in common practice, and the active domain, widely used in all forms of speech (i.e. daily, official, religious etc.). But the last form (religious language) is rooted in the passive domain (Old Slavonic and old Ukrainian languages). Nowadays common words are used in religious practice. This fact may be demonstrated by drawing on a brief analysis of religious texts in Ukrainian¹. Besides, the number of direct translations from Arabic into Ukrainian is very small and no distinctive tradition of translation has been fully-fledged till now². These problems should be discussed in more detail, they might be summarized as follows³:

¹ Not only in Islamic texts, of which the majority are written in Russian (or translated into it), but also in the liturgy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate) and Protestant literature. As for Islamic classical sources, besides the Qur'an, there is only one text devoted to Sunnah translated into Ukrainian (by the author of this article): *Sorok hadisiv an-Nawawi [An-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths]* // Translation, introduction and comments by Mykhailo Jackubovych (Alexandria: CIMS, 2006).

² We should note also the absence of Arabic-Ukrainian dictionaries. None has been compiled as yet.

³ Based on the diagram from Larson, Mildred L. *Meaning-based translation: A guide to cross-language equivalence*, p. 4 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America and Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1998).

- 1) Text to be translated (The Glorious Qur'an): the starting point of translation.
- 2) Discover the Meaning (studying language, *sharī'ah* laws, using dictionaries, *tafāsīr*, other translations etc.)¹.
- 3) Meaning (the middle point of the translation process and it should proceed from a correct understanding of the Text).
- 4) Re-present the meaning (using dictionaries of the target language², constructing the meanings of the Text according to Ukrainian linguistic frame of mind, using special language devices for correctly representing the text, unifying of the vocabulary, etc.).
- 5) Translation (text of the translation with interpolations/comments, necessary prefaces, introductions etc.).

The first three stages are common to all translators, who work on the translation of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an. The translator's work is similar to the work of the *mufassir* (exegete); but the translation (*ḥarfīyah* as well as *tafsīriyah*, literal and interpretational, respectively) should not be confused with *tafsīr*, as has been explained by adh-Dhahabī in his work³. The next two stages are no less important. A successful representation of the meanings by means of Ukrainian⁴ should be the final result of the translator's work. It will be judged not just by critical reviewers, but also by average readers, both Muslim and non-Muslim, who are unable to read and understand the original Arabic text. Now, we should describe the three important problems of understanding related to the Ukrainian translation and make an attempt to provide their solutions.

One of the main topics which should be noted in translation, in our case the Ukrainian translation of the Qur'an, is the vocabulary of translation. It could be based on a more Russified or Polonized tradition, or, on the other hand, could refer to old Church lexicon or to the modern Ukrainian language. The Glorious Qur'an has its own,

¹ Especially, the translator should follow the authentic, mainstream opinion of the true Islamic creed and prefer these views on such topics as *aḥkām al-Qur'an*, *al-asmā' wa as-sifāt*, among others.

² Ukrainian in this case.

³ adh-Dhahabī, Muḥammad Ḥusain. *At-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrīn*, Vol. 1, pp. 19-24 (Beirut: Maktabat Wahbah, 2000).

⁴ Or any other language.

well-developed lexicon, which should be studied in the proper contexts before actual translating begins. The main purposes of corresponding Ukrainian vocabulary could be determined as follows:

- 1) to provide correct *ma'ānī* of the Text.
- 2) To ensure correct understanding of the Text¹ by the reader.
- 3) To attempt to exercise emotional and rational influence on the reader, somehow analogous to the influence of original.

Based on the discussion above we propose that the vocabulary of the translation should be Modern Ukrainian Literary Language and the translator should avoid rare, archaic words and dialectal variants, Rusified and Polonized variants. However some borrowed words may be used. For example, *aṣ-ṣamad* in *sūrat* al-Ikhlās (112:2) could be translated as “*Samodostatnii*” (“Self-sufficient”), despite its modernity, and this translation will be really adequate for the meaning of the word and the correct comments on it². The same holds true of words attributed to folk language³. As a powerful source and even for the purpose of understanding, this kind of language should be used in the translation of meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān only in a limited way, where it may be impossible to simplify the text by it. If a literal translation of some part of the Qur'ān is not acceptable⁴, despite its “dependence on prior cultural knowledge”⁵, a functional translation could transform the text in a very “local” way, which would make the text compatible with the local cultural language. But if “local culture” words of translation correspond to Arabic words, such translation should be recognized as adequate. It can be illustrated by the translation of the treatment *yā-bunai-ya* from *sūrah* Luqmān (31:15-16). This expression could be rendered into Ukrainian simply by the use of a vocative case of the noun “*syn*” (“a son”): “Synu!”. This variant is

¹ According to the Qur'ān as one of the sources of *sharḥa*.

² *Tafsīr at-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 24, pp. 730-737 (Al-Qāhirah: Dar Hajar, 1422/2001). Also the meaning “Eternal” (*dāim*) is possible.

³ It should be kept in mind that the Ukrainian classical literature of the 19th century was mostly devoted to folk topics and this lexicon was the basis of the literary language. Even modern folk Ukrainian and literary languages are very closely connected.

⁴ Ad-Dhahabī, *ibid*, p. 20.

⁵ Herzfeld, Michael. *The unspeakable in pursuit of the ineffable: Representations of untranslability in ethnographic discourse // Translating Culture: Perspectives on translation and anthropology*, p. 110. (Oxford - New York: Berg, 2003).

widely used in the Ukrainian literature; however, it is better to display here the Arabic interjection *yā* and also pronoun “-*ī*”, which demonstrates a close relation between Luqman and his son. So, it should be translated as “*O, synu mii!*” (“O, my son!”). This translation is correct and understandable for Ukrainian readers despite its literal nature; also this variant has a special rhetorical message and retains the spirit of the language of the Glorious Qur'an.

A faithful translation of the Arabic lexical items (*mufradāt*) into Ukrainian should be recognized as another basic issue. For example, some problems arise while translating such terms as *amr*, *barā'ah*, *bayinah*, *ḍalālah*, *dhikr*, *faḍl*, *ḥanīf*, *iḥsān*, *ikhlās*, *nabī*, *qiyām*, *shirk*, etc. It is also very hard to represent in Ukrainian some derivatives of the verbs such as *ism al-maf'ūl* (passive participle). Also, it should be noted, that in Modern Ukrainian great attention is paid to the “mylozvuchnist” (phonetic improvement of the sentence). For example, an Arabic text with many pronouns (*-kum*, *-hum*, *-hu* etc.) could seem a very overloaded structure in Ukrainian. This is because of the distance between the verbs and pronouns in Ukrainian as in other European languages. Especially, the changes of contexts could be represented by the changes of translation of such words. *Mufradāt* from syntactic structures of the first Makki *sūrah*s (for example, vows at the beginning of al-Burūj, aṭ-Ṭāriq, al-Fajr, ash-Shams, al-Layl, aḍ-Ḍuḥā and other *sūrah*s from the 30th juz') should be translated not by transmitting simple meanings but also the rhetorical, emotional effect should be maintained as much as possible.

The next important issue is contextual translation and its close connection with *ilm at-tafsīr* (exegesis). We may assume that Islamic exegetic tradition developed some special theories of interpretation and established a connection between such elements of language as *lafz*, *ma'nā*, *ism*, *alimah*, *dāl*, *madlūl*, etc. Some of these theories could be very useful for the methodology of translation. A good example of this research could be illustrated by the theory, developed by Shaikh al-Islam ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328AH) and displayed in his *at-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*¹ and *al-Ḥaḥiqah wa al-Majāz*². Ibn Taimiyah perceives written speech as a continuous chain of *alfāz* which are pointing (*tadullu*) to

¹ Ibn Taimiyah, *at-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Vol. 1-7 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, W.D.).

² Ibn Taimiyah, *al-Ḥaḥiqah wa al-Majāz* // Majmū' Fatāwā Shaikh al-Islām Taqī ad-Dīn ibn Taimiyah, Vol. 20, pp. 220-269 (Beirut: Dār al-Wafā', 1426/2005).

some meaning (*ma'nā*). “A word has a meaning only in meaningful contexts”¹. So, “a simple word does not mean anything, if it is not connected with speaker’s conditions (*aḥwāl*) and whose habit (*‘ādah*) [of the speech] are known”². Even so-called “universals of language” (for example, “sky”, “ground”, “cold”, “warm”) are changing, depending on “time, place and condition”³. Abstracting from the issue of *majāz*⁴ in the Qur’ān, we may assume that ibn Taymiyah’s theory is devoted to the general and special reconstruction of meanings. In general, his arguments could be used against a literal translation of some Qur’ānic *āyahs*. We may also relate the above mentioned *‘ādah* (“habit”) to the Ukrainian language, and if the translator uses structures that are really unusual for Ukrainian speakers, his work will be against a “habit”. For example, a literal translation of the ninth *āyah* from *sūrat* ad-Dukhān will appear as “but they play in doubt”⁵ in English and “*Ale zh vony graiut’sia v sumniivakh*” in Ukrainian. But it will be unclear for the Ukrainian speaker. How is it possible “to play in doubts” and why “doubts” have anything to do with “play”? So, the structure of translation should be changed. Moreover, the primary meaning of the *āyah* must be presented. Anyway, context-free translation will have no meaning; some explanations should be included into the comments or interpolations, but the translator should not confuse the Text with comments on it. A Text has its own boundaries (*quyud*) which determine meanings and it is not feasible to determine a *lafz* with an absolute, universal sense⁶.

Translation and the principles of *tafsīr*

‘Ilm at-tafsīr is a science, based, to great extent, on tradition (*naql*) and language studies (*‘ulūm al-lughah*)⁷. It has its own rules closely connected with the other traditional sciences (such as *fiqh*, for example). The methods of *‘ilm at-tafsīr* are mainly used as instruments for

¹ Ibid, p. 250.

² Ibid, p. 269.

³ Ibid, p. 228.

⁴ This term is often translated as “metaphore” but its meaning is wider.

⁵ Cf., for instance, Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s translation: “Yet they play about in doubt” (*The Glorious Qur’an. Translated by Abdallah Yusuf Ali* (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2004)).

⁶ Ibn Taymiyah, Ibid, pp. 226-227.

⁷ According to the classification of ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406AH). See ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 554-555 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1421/2001).

understanding the Text. Earlier, we mentioned its connection with translation, and we describe below the main points of such links.

The first among the general principles of *tafsīr* is: “Every general meaning should be recognized as general before a particular meaning is to be found”¹. This principle should be reflected in translation. For example, short vows from the first Makkī *sūrah*s² should be translated in a general way. It could be illustrated by *al-mūriyāt* from the second *āyah* of *sūrat al-Ādiyāt*. This word could be interpreted in different ways, so the translator should not off for specifying the meaning by using such a widely used rendition as “horses”³. Alternatively, he may include his explanations or interpolations or separate comments (as the Ukrainian translator Rybalkin did), citing the source of comments.

The second principle is: “Import is related to the general purpose of a word and not to a particular reason of revelation”. This principle is devoted to *asbāb al-tanzīl* (Reason of revelation). The rule of generality of Qur'ānic meanings is to be noted. Additionally, it could be explained by the tradition quoted in *tafsīr* at-Ṭabarī: “An *āyah* which has been revealed in relation to some particular person, should become general (*‘āmm*) after it”⁴. As it has been shown earlier, some translators explain the meaning of an *āyah* by describing the reasons of revelation. However, it should be mentioned in comments (or a preface to comments) that this condition was only a reason (*sabab*) for the *āyah*, but not its purpose (*ghāyah*), because the Qur'ān as a Sacred Book is open to all mankind⁵.

The third and fourth principles are closely related to *al-qirā'āt* (modes of Qur'anic reading) and say that “different *qirā'āt* extend the number of meanings” and “the meaning differs according to the spelling (*rasm*:

¹ On this count the study the of Dr. Fahd ar-Rūmī is used: Fahd ar-Rūmī. *Buḥūth fi uṣūl at-tafsīr wa manāhij-hi*, pp. 136-143 (Riyadh: Maktabat at-Tawba, 1419).

² See, for example al-Balad, 90:3, “al-Ādiyyāt”, 100:1-5.

³ *Tafsīr al-Jalālain's* (p. 600, Dimashq: Dār ibn Kathīr, W.D.) interpretation of *al-muriyāt* as “horses that strike sparks” seems to be a source for recent commentaries such as *al-Muntakhab* (see *al-Muntakhab fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm bi-l-lugatayn al-‘arabiyyah wa ar-rūsīyyah*, pp. 1266-1267 (al-Qāhirah: al-Ahrām, 1420/2000)) and exegesis of Shaikh al-Marāghī: *Tafsīr al-Marāghī*, Vol. 30, pp. 221-224 (al-Qāhirah: Maṭba‘at Muṣtafā al-Bābī, 1365/1946).

⁴ Quoted by Fahd ar-Rūmī, *Ibid*, p. 138.

⁵ See *sūrat al-A‘rāf*, 7:158.

graphic form) of the word (*kalimah*)". Some modern translations are based on the Cairo edition of the Glorious Qur'an¹ and the Ukrainian translation is not an exception. Some differences in *qirā'āt* do not change the meaning² (as for translation), but some variants could influence the translation³. But if a translator chooses for his work the Cairo edition, he should follow the proposed variants and also use some sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) traditions for a deeper understanding of *qirā'āt*. His comments must not be filled with the different readings because of two reasons:

- 1) These differences are interesting only to specialists.
- 2) The difference of *qirā'āt* could leave a false impression on the reader's mind that the Qur'an has differences and a faithful version has been lost in history.

The next principle is devoted to the context of the Text (*ṣiyāq al-Qur'an*). It is generally known that the best kind of *tafsīr* is a *tafsīr* of one part of the Qur'an by other parts of Qur'an (i.e. *tafsīr Qur'an bi-l Qur'an*). For example, there are a lot of demonstratives such as *alladhīna*, *allatī* and kinds of pronouns (*-kum*, *-hum*). Sometimes it is not clear from one *āyah* as to who is the referent of the pronoun. So the translator and *mufasssīr* should study the previous, following or similar verses to identify it. Also, translation may include some kind of indication next to the verb *qāla* ("he said") in order to the name the speaker.

One of the principles is attributed to the problem of language. According to the old methods of *'ilm at-tafsīr*, used by *as-salaf aṣ-ṣāliḥ* (the rightly-guided predecessors), translators should explore the meaning of the "external meanings" (*az-zāhir*) of the words and be very careful about so-called "hidden meanings" which are unknown in language and tradition (*naql*). This problem is well-known in the context of the interpretation of *muqatta'āt* (*disjointed letters*). Arabic language does not provide the meaning of such expressions as "Kāf Hā Yā 'Ain Ṣād" from the nineteenth *sūrah*, as Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī said⁴. If there is no sound tradition for such texts, the translator

¹ Following the Ḥaṣṣ-^can-^cĀṣm mode of reading.

² Orientalist views on this issue and their fallacies could be found in 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Isma'īl ash-Shalabī's exploration: *Rasm al-Muṣḥaf al-^cUthmānī wa awhām al-mustashriqīn fī qirā'āt al-Qur'an al-Karīm* (al-Qāhīrah: Maktabat Wahba, 1419/1999).

³ Such as differences in the word *ḥamī'ah* (al-Kahf, 18:86), mentioned by at-Ṭabarī (*Tafsīr at-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 15, pp. 375-378).

⁴ See: *Mafāṭīḥ al-Ghaib*, Vol. 21, pp. 178-181.

should avoid interpreting them without remarks about the subjectivity of these comments and their rationalistic nature (*tafsīr bi-r-ra'ī*).

Another important principle is the priority of *shara'ī* meaning over the literal (*luġhawī*) meaning. But the last kind of interpretation could be also possible if the context allows.

It could be illustrated by referring to the verb *ṣallā* used in some *āyahs*. For example, in al-Baqarah, 2:3 the noun *ṣalāh* used in the sense of the five prescribed prayers¹, when in at-Tawbah, 9:103 the verb *ṣalla* is used in a general sense and means “to supplicate”. This rule should be followed in the translation of the Glorious Qur'an and it should refer to the meaningful contexts (*al-qarā'in al-ma'nawiyah*) mentioned earlier with reference to ibn Taymiyah's linguistic views.

Conclusion

The Glorious Qur'an is untranslatable as such. It is obvious not only because of the many problems that arise during translating, but also by the clear, inimitable text of the Qur'an as it is. However, this explanation is more appropriate for an introduction than a conclusion of our present study. Keeping this fact in mind, translators should understand the true meanings of the *āyah* and to re-state them in their own language. In this way some priorities and perspectives may be introduced to the method of translation. Despite restricting the main topic of this article to the Ukrainian language, some points are of benefit to the translators of the Glorious Qur'an into other European language as well.

Our analysis of the published partial Ukrainian translations of meanings of the Glorious Qur'an allows us to explore some difficulties and possible solutions for future translations. We may summarize these findings as follows:

1) The meanings of the Glorious Qur'an should be translated into the Modern Ukrainian Literary Language, which is still developing. Translation should be free from dialectal expressions, and the Russified or Polonised alternative words. This issue is also related to the commonly used structures of folk language. However, the vocabulary of Old Ukrainian (15th-18th centuries) could be used as a reference² source along with Belarusian *kitabs* and more recent Polish,

¹ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīm*, Vol. 1, p. 269.

² For the deeper understanding of the contexts of some Ukrainian words.

Russian, Bulgarian and Macedonian translations of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān.

2) Ukrainian translation¹ of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān should attempt, as much as possible, to preserve the effect of the original, described by the Qur'ān itself² as much as possible in translation without altering the primary meaning. Perhaps a vaguely resemblant stage could be reached by the use of rhetorical effects. However, this dynamic perspective of translation also has its limits set within the text of the original language, and meanings within the context of Islamic law.

3) The translator may preserve literary meanings of Arabic text in Ukrainian forms of expression, if these meanings are correctly understood by readers. We suppose that the text of translation may include some interpolations³, but it is better to limit them. Excessive use of interpolations may be misinterpreted by the reader and may create a false impression about the clarity of the Glorious Text. The translator should be very careful how he goes about this.

4) In every stage of the translation, the translator should think of his readers. Probably this may appear as a given to some scholars, but the general overview of Ukrainian translations calls to greater attention this important issue. Adequacy and correctness of translation should result in the correctness of understanding.

“It is impossible for the translator to be ignorant of the two languages – the language from which translation takes place and the language which will be used in translation”⁴. These seemingly simple words of ibn Taymiyah could be used as the basis for the recent studies of the Glorious Qur'ān translation, which will be devoted not only to Arabic language studies, but also to the study of the local languages and its potential to represent the Final Scripture – the Glorious Qur'ān.

¹ Like any other translation.

² For instance *sūrah*s al-Mā'idah, 5:83 and az-Zumar, 39:23.

³ Separated from the body of the translation by some kind of signs (brackets, etc.).

⁴ Ibn Taymiyah, *ar-Radd 'alā l-Mantayiqiyyin*, p. 47 (Lahur: Dar Tarjumān as-Sunnah, 1396/1976).

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