TRANSLATING THE CONNOTATIVE MEANINGS OF COLOUR EXPRESSIONS IN THE GLORIOUS QU'RAN

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Abstract

This paper investigates problems of translating the connotative meanings of colour expressions in the Holy Qur'an.Three colour expressions have been examined in the paper ,namely white , green and yellow and three well-known commentators have been consulted ,namely Ibn Kathir, al-Qurtubi and al- Razi .Then an assessment of six English eminent renditions of the colour expressions in the Qu'ran will be conducted. A literature review of the previous studies have been presented .

It is found that the white colour has a negative connotation in English and Arabic when collocating with the parts of human body , especially ,hand ,or it can signify diseases ,but when the whiteness is divine and free from evil there will be no sign of sickness or harm. Yellow colour has an identical negative connotation in both English and Arabic when it collocates with plants but has a positive connotation when it collocates with other thing ,particularly cow . Green colour has the same denotative and connotative meanings in English and Arabic.

1.Introduction

Arabic And English are two linguistically and culturally unrelated languages . Such unrelatedness is reflected in colour terms and expressions , among other things . For instance , the expression وجه ابيض in the following Qur'anic Aya يوم تبيض وجوه وتسود وجوه connotes righteousness and purity , while its literal rendition in English " white face " connotes some symptoms of sickness. Such an example shows the difference between English and Arabic in regard to colour expressions.

The study will examine three colour terms in the Quran , namely white , green and yellow. It aims at shedding light on this problematic area and providing solutions for it .To achieve this aim , the study hypothesizes that connotative meaning of white colour in the Quran is the most difficult to translate than the other colour terms.

Basically , there are three steps to be followed in handling each Aya that includes colour terms and expressions. They are:

Step 1

To give the linguistic and religious meanings of each colour expression , this study will depend on three well-known commentators of the Holy Qur'an , namely Ibn Kathir , al-Qurtubi and al-Razi .These meanings will be brief owing to the fact that the three commentary books give the meaning of different Ayas in detail that go beyond the scope of the study which handles different colour terms and expressions from a translational perspective .

Step 2

Then an evaluation of six English well-known renditions of each colour term and expressions will be given .Such evaluation will depend solely on the functional and connotative

meanings of each colour term and expression rather than the literal meaning .

The researcher will present A.Y.Ali's (1968) rendition for each Aya which encompasses colour terms and expressions fully, then he will present the others' renditions of just colour terms and expressions of each Aya and not the rendition of the whole Aya.

Step 3

The researcher , sometimes , will suggest a rendition of his own for these colour terms and expressions for the purpose of comparison between his rendition and the other renditions of this study .He will also suggest his own rendition when the six English renditions are inadequate in rendering the intended meaning of the Qur'anic colour terms and expressions.

2. Previous Studies

Most of the studies which were written in English have dealt with the subject of colours with reference to two important hypotheses, namely: the Whorfian – Sapir hypothesis and the Berlin and Kay hypothesis.

Sapson (1980) discusses the subject of colour as a " favourable arena " for the Whorf Hypothesis . He states ,

> Colour is in fact a particularly favourable arena for the Whorf hypothesis , possibly the most favourable of all . It is an immediate property of observed sense -data: To find out vekti meant ' tax ' or ' charity ' , we had not only to observe but also to investigate speakers' beliefs about vekti, but a red patch irrespective of the beliefs of the man who sees it. And among perceptual variables , that of colour is one in which we are

> physically Capable of making a very large number of distinctions (they are estimated to be at least 7,500,000 discriminate shades of colour),so the question how these are grouped into classes in any given language is very far from trivial (p.95).

As for Berlin and Kay's hypothesis ,it has been discussed by many linguists in detail. Michaels (1977:334-335) summarizes Berlin and Kay's findings on colour as follows :

1. A universal inventory of eleven colour categories exists from which different languages and cultures encode different subsets.

2. The eleven universal colour categories are ; white , black ,red, green , yellow, blue, brown ,purple , pink, orange ,and gray.

3. The inventory of colour categories is hierarchically structured such that languages which encode fewer than all eleven as basic colour terms (BCT's) encode them in a fixed colour as follows:

Stage I – All languages have terms for white and black.
Stage II – Additional terms for red.
Stage III – additional terms for either green or yellow.
Stage IV– Additional term to give both green and yellow.
Stage V– Additional term for blue.
Stage VI– Additional term for brown.
Stage VII– Additional term(s) for any of the following :
Pink ,purple ,orange , and gray.

4. Each of the stages I through VII represents an evolutionary stage through which language must pass during its historical development.

5. The stages I through VII show a positive correlation with cultural complexity and/or technological advancement such

that peoples at stage I have less complex cultures and/or less advanced technologies than peoples at stage II , etc.

Most of the studies which were written on the subject of colour were either advocating or refuting these two hypotheses . For example, Leech (1974)advocates Berlin and Kay's hypotheses by saying ,

> Yet from the unpromising diversity of material from every major part of the world ,Berlin and Kay arrive at the bold hypothesis that there is a universal set of exactly eleven colour categories , from which each language takes a subset.

Michaels (1977) refutes both hypotheses of Whorf and Berlin and Kay .He states ,

> The very fact that the Hopi expressions are directly translatable into English contradicts Whorf's claim that concepts of time are not given in substantially the same form by experience to all men(p.339).

Arabic also gives a great deal of attention to colours through its poets and others .The colour becomes one of the subjects which is given separate chapters in the classification of the well-known linguists .For instance,

كتاب الخيل (The book of horses) which was written by Abu Ubaidah (1981) can be regarded as one of the oldest linguistic classification which devoted separated chapters for colours .

Abu Ubaidah (1981:96) talks about the Arab interest in horses and their favours of them .In addition , he devotes a significant part of the book to talk about colours of horses . He mentions these colours collectively as أدهم (Adham), أخضر

(Axdar), أحوى (Ahwa), كميت (Kumayt), أشقر (Asqar) , أصفر (Asfar), ورد (ward), أشهب (Ashab) and أشيم (Asyam),then he began to talk about each one of these colours separately.

AL-Tha'alibi (1994) devoted a separate chapter(Chapter 13) to talking about the colours of men ,horses ,camels ,goats and sheep. This chapter is entitled في ضروب من الألوان والآثار (On the Varieties of Colours and Marks).He divides the chapter into twenty-nine parts where he talks about different colours with reference to men ,plants ,animals, diseases, horses ,etc…This book which is entitledفقه اللغة وسر العربية

(Philosophy and Secret of Arabic)is regarded as one of the most important resources regarding colours.

3.Denotative and Connotative Meanings

Denotative meaning is the objective (dictionary) relationship between a word and the reality to which it refers (Crystal,1987:418). Connotative meaning ,on the other hand , is the communicative power of a word by virtue of what it refers to (Leech,1974:15).

Bell (1991:98-99) makes a good distinction between denotative and connotative meanings saying that :

> The first refers to meaning which is referential ,objective and cognitive and ,hence, the shared property of the speech community which uses the language of which the word or sentence forms a part . The second, in contrast, refers to meaning which is not referential but associational ,subjective and affective. This kind of meaning, being personal, may or may not be shared by the community at large

Moreover , connotative meaning ,unlike the denotative one, is culturally- bound. Connotations tend to change from time to time and from society to society. To a significant extent the connotative meaning is independent of the denotative meaning. Some words are said to have no denotative meaning , but only connotative meaning such as ' hurrah ' and ' boo' which only express or arouse feelings. Two utterances may have the same denotative meaning but very different connotative meanings .Also, a word's connotation may vary while its denotation remains unchanged.

4. Connotative Meaning and Translation

Connotative meaning poses greater difficulty to the translator than denotative meaning because it is variable according to historical period and culture .The wider the gap between the SL and the TL cultures ,the more problematic the issue of translatability becomes .Some words with neutral connotations in the SL may have strong emotional overtones in the TL if translated literally (Larson ,1984:131).Further, a word may have a positive connotation in one language and a negative one in another. Nevertheless , there may be various lexical choices a translator may draw based on connotative meanings (Ibid.).' Mismatches ' in connotation between the SL and TL lexemes result in loss in the translation especially in literary texts, where any translation , as Savory explains ,is but an imitation or recreation of the original ;it is only a translation in the primitive sense of being a transcript of its meaning (1957:153).

One should not assume ,however , that denotative meaning is easier to translate than connotative meaning since it is often difficult to find denotative equivalents .This is because as Larson indicates , " languages combine meaning components

differently" . For example , the word إسراء in Arabic denotes " walking at night". In English no single lexeme can be found to have these two components in one and the same lexeme .Hence , translator " must not expect that there will be a literal equivalence (Larson ,1984:154).The translator , as Larson suggests , has to bear in mind that a number of words may be employed as an equivalent of a single word in the TL(Ibid.).Thus , the word إسراء is equivalent to the phrase "walking at night."

In addition, all languages tend to have closely related pairs of words distinguished from one another only in a single component of meaning (Ibid.:80).This component is termed as " a semantic component which serves to distinguish one meaning from another , whether the meanings belong to one word or several"(Nida , 1964:229).

The contrastive component may be denotative, as in ' see' and 'show' where the contrastive component (to cause to see) is the distinguishing causative component(Larson , 1984:80) .It may also be connotative as in the words ' exceptional ' and ' abnormal' where the first is appreciative and the second is depreciative .It is important for the translator to find the components of meaning which distinguish the one from the other if he is to translate accurately (Ibid.).

5. Translating the Connotative Meanings of Colours

The problems of translating colour terms and expressions in the Holy Qur'an will be discussed in detail in this section.

5.1 Connotative Meaning of White Colour

White colour is used eleven times in the Holy Qur'an.It is used with different meanings to characterize Moses's hand(Peace be upon him),faces of the believers ,Yacob's(Jacob) blindness(Peace be upon him),tracts of mountains and finally

wine of the Paradise .The usage of white colour in the Holy Qur'an is not confined to its literal meaning only but the connotative and figurative meanings are also involved .Therefore, to understand verses which have white colour terms and expressions and eventually render them accurately and adequately, translators should be fully aware of these meanings ;otherwise their renditions will be meaningless.

White colour is used connotatively in the following Ayas:

١. {وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاء لِلنَّاظِرِينَ} (١٠٨) سورة الأعراف

A.Y.A: And he drew out his hand , and behold! It was white to all beholders.

Ar: ……it was white…

Da:…. it appeared white….

H.A.A : …it was clear to all who saw …

Ir: …. and imagine , it was white to the

Pi : … it was white ...

٢. {وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاء لِلنَّاظِرِينَ} (٣٣) سورة الشعراء

A.Y.A: And he drew out his hand , and behold! It was white to all beholders.

Ar; …..it was white …

Da: … it appered white …

H.A.A : … and it appeared as white

Ir : … and imagine , it was white …

Pi : … it was white …

٣. {اسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاء مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ وَاضْمُمْ إِلَيْكَ جَنَاحَكَ مِنَ الرَّهْبِ فَذَانِكَ بُرْهَانَانِ مِن رَّبِّكَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ} (٣٢) سورة القصص

A.Y.A : Move thy hand into thy bosom and it will come forth white without slain (or harm), and draw thy hand close to thy side (to guard) against fear .Those are the two

credentials from thy Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs : For truly they are a people rebellious and wicked.

Ar: …and it will come forth white without evil…

Da: …and it will come out white , although unharmed…

H.A.A : … it will come forth white without hint …

Ir: … it will come out white without being harmed…

Pi : … it will come forth white without hurt…

٤. {وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاء مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ } (١٢) سورة النمل

A.Y.A : Now put thy hand into thy bosom, and it will come forth white without stain (or harm): (these are) among the nine signs (thou will take) to Pharaoph and his people for they are a people rebellious in transgression.

Ar: … it will come forth white without evil…

Da: … it will come out white , although unharmed…

H.A.A : … it will come forth while without a blemish …

Ir: … it will come out white without (causing any) evil …

Pi : … it will come forth white , but unhurt…

٥. {وَاضْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاء مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ آيَةً أُخْرَى} (٢٢) سورة طه

A.Y.A : Now draw thy hand close to thy side : It shall come forth white (and shining) , without harm (or stain) as another sign ..

Ar: … it shall come forth white ,without evil…

Da: … it shall come out white , although unharmed…

H.A.A : … it is while without a blemish …

Ir: … it will come out white without (showing) any blemish…

Pi : … it will come forth white without unhurt…

Discussion

These five Ayas , which appear in different suras in the Holy Qu'ran , present the second sign of Allah to Pharaoh. This sign was shown to him by Moses who was commanded by Allah to put his hand in his bossom and drew it forth , it would become white and shining without hurt.

White colour is used with positive connotation . The whiteness of Moses' hand was not normal. It was divine and shining . It lightened the space between heaven and earth . Its light was so bright as the bright of the sun and the moon . While colour usually has a negative connotation when collocating with hand . It is a sign of disease like leprosy .However, contrary to the normal norm , it was a sign of divine capability

represented in the abnormal light of his hand . This light was dazzling in the eyes of the beholders and was bright day and night .(1)

All the five Ayas present this sign of Allah ,i.e., the divine and shining whiteness of Moses' hands ,despite the fact that each Aya has appeared in different suras . The connotative meaning of white colour is identical in all Ayas. Translators should transfer this connotative meaning in their renditions; otherwise they will commit a great mistake .The divine and shining characteristics of Moses' hand should be transferred accurately and adequately into English .This can be achieved not by resorting to literal translation of the colour term ' بيضاء ' but to functional translation instead .

(1) Ibn Kathir, (1966, vol .3:205), (1966, vol.4;504), (1966, vol.5:100), (1966,vol.5:224), (1966,Vol.5 : 279).
Al-Razi, (1985,vol.22:29-30) , (1985, vol.14 :196), (1985, vol.24:132), (1985,vol.184), (1985,vol.24:247).

Unfortunately , no one of the above renditions has been succeeded in transferring the divine image of the whiteness of Moses' hand except A.Y.Ali's rendition .Let's discuss these renditions for the purpose of judgment.

Pickthall and Arberry resort to literal translation in their rendition of the connotation of white colour in all the five Ayas. This is totally wrong because white colour ,as mentioned above ,has a negative connotation when it collocates with hand or it can signify disease .They should show in their renditions that this whiteness is divine and free from evil ,and this cannot be achieved by resorting to literal translation. Therefore, their renditions are inaccurate and inadequate.

Dawood commits the same errors as the others do .He fails to transfer the image of Moses' hand fully , particularly in the suras of الشعراء and الأعراف in which he uses ' white ' as an equivalent to بيضاء

which is a wrong choice .In the other three Ayas , although the image of white hand is clear in showing that this whiteness is not a sign of disease, translator does not show Allah's power by showing the features of Moses' hand .

H.A.Ali tries not to be literal in his rendition of the colour term بيضاء in the surah of ألأعراف by using the English term ' clear ' as an equivalent for it but, unfortunately , he confuses the meaning rather than clarifying it as well.

Irving commits the same errors of others . For example , he uses " white without showing any blemish "," white without causing any evil " and " white without being harmed " in the suras of النمل و طه and القصص

respectively . He could have used one rendition instead of three and still satisfied the intended meaning . Also, he never

made mention of the characteristic of Moses' hand whiteness which is divine , shining and free from evil.

As for A.Y.Ali , his renditions of these five Ayas are the best in comparison with other's renditions because the connotative meaning of white colour in these Ayas is accurately transferred into English .His renditions are literal but he used a footnote which showed the divine characteristics of Moses' hand. He stated in a footnote in the rendition of the sura of ألأعراف that ;

> The second Sign displayed by Moses was even more puzzling to the Egyptians.Moses drew out his hand from the folds of the garments on his breast, and it was white and shining as with divine light! This was to counter any suggestions of evil ,which the serpent might have created .This was no work of evil,- of black magic , or a trick or illusion .His hand was transfigured – with a light which no Egyptian sorcerers could produce. In Islam the " white hand " of Moses has passed into a proverb , for a symbol of divine glory dazzling to the beholders.(Ali,1982:373)

He also uses a footnote in the rendition of the sura of طه . He states in it that :

> The second of the greater miracles shown to Moses was the " white " (shining) hand. Ordinarily , when the skin becomes white , it is a Sign of disease , leprosy or something loathsome .Here there was no question of disease .On the contrary, the hand was glorified , and it shone with

a divine light .Such a miracles was beyond Egyptian or human magic(Ibid.:794).

As for our renditions of colour term بيضاء ' white ' in the suras of ألأعراف and ألشعراء and the white colour expression " من بيضاء غير سوء " in the suras of النمل و طه and القصص , we suggest the following identical renditions for the five Ayas :

….. it was shining with a divine whiteness free from evil.
(AL- 'Arāf)
….it will be shining with a divine whiteness free from evil.
(AL- Šu'araa')
…… it will be shining with divine whiteness free from evil.
(Taha)
….. it will be shining with a divine whiteness free from evil.
(AL- Qasas)
….. it will be shining with a divine whiteness free from evil.
(AL- Naml)

It is clear that we have used an identical rendition for the connotative meaning of white colour in all the five Ayas which show the divine features of Moses' hand .

5.2 Connotative Meaning of Green Colour

Green colour is used eight times in the Holy Qur'an with different meanings to characterize the plants , the garments and the cushions of Paradise . This colour pleases the onlookers; therefore, Allah chooses it to be the colour of the plants and the Paradise .

Green colour with connotative meanings can be found in the following Ayas:

١. {وَهُوَ الَّذِيَ أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُّخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُّتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِن طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ

وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ انظُرُواْ إِلِى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكُمْ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ} (٩٩) سورة الأنعام

A.Y.A: It is He sendeth down rain from the skies : with it we produce vegetation of all kinds : From some we produce green (crops), out of which we produce close-compounded grain out of the date-palm and its sheaths (or spathes) (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near ;and (then there are) gardens of grapes, and olives , and pomegranates ,each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety) : when they begin to bear fruit ,feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof .Behold !In these things there are Signs for people who believe.

Ar: ….and then we have brought forth the green leaf of it …

Da: … . From these we bring forth green foliage …

H.A.A : …and grow from it waving leaves of green….

Ir: ...we produce green vegetation from it ….

Pi: …. we bring forth the green blade ….

Green colour is used here with connotative meaning to signify freshness and tenderness which means activity and life of plants . Usually , yellow colour , when collocating with plants, signifies inactivity and the end of the life cycle of the plants .Therefore , as far as plants are concerned , green colour is the opposite of yellow colour in that it has a positive connotation when it collocates with plants (Ibn Kathir , 1966,vol.3 : 70 and al-Razi , 1985,vol.13: 108).

Green colour has the same denotative and connotative meanings in English and Arabic . Due to this similarity , particularly with plants , we think it is easy to establish an equivalent for green colour term خضراً into English .

Concerning the above renditions , all succeed in their renditions and we think that there is no need to suggest a rendition of our own.

٢. {أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّـهَ أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء فَتُصْبِحُ الْأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً إِنَّ اللَّـهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ} (٦٣) سورة الحج

A.Y.A: Seest thou not that God sends down rain from the sky, and forthwith the earth becomes clothed with green ? For God is He Who understands the finest mysteries and is well-acquainted (with them).

Ar: …. The earth becomes green?....

Da: … and covers the earth with vegetation ?....

H.A.A: … and to the earth enrobes in greenery ?...

Pi : … the earth becometh green upon the morrow ?...

Green colour is also used here with connotative meaning to show an example of Allah's power and His grace to all people in the worldly life. Allah is He Who send water down from the sky which makes the earth become clothed with different kinds of plants which differ in shape ,size , colour , taste ,etc.(Ibn Kathir ,1966,vol4:662 and al-Razi,1985.vol.23:61-62)

There is no problem in the rendition of green colour from English into Arabic and vice –versa because the denotative and the connotative meanings of this colour are approximately the same in both languages particularly when it collocates with the plants .Therefore, their literal translation can be regarded as the correct method in rendering the colour term مخضرة in the Aya .

Concerning the above renditions ,they all use different colour terms as equivalents for مخضرة .A.Y.A, Arberry and Pithkhall use ' green ' ; H.A.Ali uses ' greenery ' ; Irving uses ' verdant ' ; and Dawood uses ' vegetation ' . The intended

meaning of the Qur'anic colour term مخضرة is accurately translated in all the above renditions.

Finally , any of the above renditions is a correct rendition. Therefore , there is no need to suggest a further rendition.

5.3 Connotative Meaning of Yellow Colour

Yellow colour is used five times in the Holy Qur'an to characterize the plants , the cow which Allah commands the Children of Israel to sacrifice and the sparks of the Hell.

Yellow colour is used with connotative meaning in the following Ayas:

١. {أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُّخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِأُوْلِي الْأَلْبَابِ} (٢١) سورة الزمر

A.Y.A : Seest thou not that God sends down rain from the sky and leads it through springs in the earth ? Then he causes to grow , therewith , produce of various colours : then it withers : Thou wilt see it grow yellow; then He makes it dry up and crumble away .Truly , in this , is a message of remembrance to men of understanding .

Ar: …. Then they wither , and thou seest them turning yellow

Da: …. They wither , they turn yellow ….

H.A.A : … then they yellow and ye see them ….

Ir : … next it withers away so you see it yellowed ….

Yellow colour is used here with connotative meaning to present the end of the life cycle of the plants .The life cycle of the plants begins with green colour and ends with yellow one .Green colour , when collocating with the plants , denotes dry , wither and the end of the life cycle of the plants .These two colours are, therefore, antonyms when they collocate with plants (Ibn Kathir ,1966,vol.6: 86-87 and al-Razi,1985,vol.26:264) .

Yellow colour expression مصفراً is used here with connotative meaning , and we think that the translators can adopt literal translation for rendering it , because of the identical connotation of yellow colour , when it collocates with the plants, in both languages Arabic and English.

Concerning the above renditions , they all succeed in their resorting to use literal translation of yellow colour expression مصفراً into English , which is a very good choice. We think that readers can adopt any of the above renditions as a final rendition for this colour expression ,and therefore, there is no need to suggest a rendition of his own .

٢. {وَلَئِنْ أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا فَرَأَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَّظَلُّوا مِن بَعْدِهِ يَكْفُرُونَ } (٥١) سورة الروم

A.Y.A : And if we (but) send a Wind from which they see (their tilth) turn yellow ,- behold they become , thereafter , ungrateful(Unbelievers) !

Ar : …. and they see it growing yellow …

Da: … let loose on them a searing wind …

H.A.A : …. send the scaring wind and their fields are yellow , barren….

Ir : … so they might see it turning things yellow ….

Pi : …. Sent a wind and they behold it yellow…

Yellow colour expression مصفراً has a connotative meaning in this Aya. It us used here to mean a scaring wind .This colour has a negative connotation when it collocates with plants , winds and clouds in the Holy Qur'an .It means "dry plants " when it collocates with plants , " scaring wind " when it collocates with winds and " unrainy cloud " when collocating with clouds (al-Qurtubi, 1966 ,vol.14:45).

Any tendency to literal translation will , therefore, ruin the meaning of this colour expression totally .Functional translation is the best method , when translators should follow in

the rendition of yellow colour expression مصفراً .Let's discuss the above renditions to see the method they adopt in their renditions.

Pickthall is inadequate in transferring the intended connotative meaning of the colour expression مصفراً when he renders it as " wind and they behold it yellow ". Unfortunately , this is inaccurate rendition because he does not specify what kind of winds Allah has sent . Moreover, he does not provide the searing effects of this kind of winds on the plants.

Arberry's rendition of the colour expression مصفراً is not better than Pickthall's . The same error of Pickthall is committed in his rendition, i.e., the tendency to literal translation.

Irving's rendition is also inaccurate .He renders the colour expression of this Aya as " a wind so they might see it turning things yellow ". One can notice that the intended meaning of the Qur'anic colour expression مصفراً is not transferred in his version . The term ' things' is not appropriate and he should have been more specific in determining what kind of things. The intended meaning of the influence of the wind is not transferred in his rendition and he uses " turning things yellow " instead.

Dawood renders the colour expression مصفراً just as " searing wind " .This is functional translation but still it is not enough to transfer the connotative meaning of مصفراً fully. He should have mentioned the influence of the searing wind on the plants which turns into dry and yellow . In comparison with the above – discussed renditions, this rendition is more effective.

A.Y.Ali mentions the influence of a wind on the tilth without clarifying what kind of wind Allah has sent, i.e., the features of this wind .Therefore, his rendition is also unacceptable.

As for H.A.Ali, he works out the most effective rendition of all.The connotative meaning of the expression مصفراً is fully transferred into English .He renders it as " the searing wind and their fields are yellow , barren which is accurate and adequate rendition in showing what kind of a wind and its destructive effects.

H.A.Ali's rendition can be considered as an accurate adequate rendition and eventually there is no need to suggest a rendition of our own.

٣. {اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ} (٢٠) سورة الحديد

A.Y.A: Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement ,pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying , (in rivalry)among yourselves ,riches and children .Here is a similitude : How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers ; soon it withers ; thou wilt see it grow yellow ; then it becomes dry and crumbles away .But in the hereafter is a penalty severe (For the devotees of wrong). And Forgiveness from God and (His) Good pleasure (For the devotees of God) , and what is the life of this world , but goods and chattels of deception ?

Ar : ….then it withers and thou seest it turning yellow…

Da : …..but then they wither and turn yellow…..

H.A.A: ...but to it withers ,turneth yellow …

Ir: ……...then it wither away and you see it turning yellow ..

Pi : …….it drieth up and thou seest it turning yellow …

Yellow colour is used here with connotative meaning to signify the end of life cycle of the plants .Yellow colour, when collocating with the plants , has an identical connotation in English and Arabic .Therefore, there will be no problem in rendering the colour expression of this Aya مصفراً literally. When we say نبات أصفر in Arabic and we render it literally in English as " yellow plants", we mean in both languages that the plant is dry and wither .Therefore , we think that the best method of rendering the colour expression مصفراً is to resort to literal translation.

Concerning the above renditions , all translators resort to literal translation .They all render the colour term مصفراً as ' yellow' therefore, we think that each of the above renditions can be adopted as an effective rendition for the colour expression مصفراًin this Aya.

٤. {قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاء فَاقِعٌ لَّوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ النَّاظِرِينَ} (٦٩) سورة البقرة

A.Y.A : They said : Beseech on your behalf thy Lord to make plain to us her color .He said : " He says : A fawn-coloured heifer, pure and rich in tone , the admiration of beholders!"

Ar: …she shall be a golden cow ,bright her colour ….

Da: ….let the cow be yellow , a rich yellow …

H.A.A :… the bovine should be golden-coloured , rich in glaze…

Ir: ……she is a bright yellow cow…

Pi: … verily she is a yellow cow .Bright in her colour…

Yellow colour is used here with connotative meaning to characterize the cow which Allah has asked Children of Israel to sacrifice .Children of Israel asks Moses to tell them the colour

of the cow. Moses answers them that Allah says it was a yellow, pure , clear and bright cow which pleases the onlookers .

Ibn Kathir (1966,vol.1 : 193), al-Qurtubi (1966,vol.1: 450-451) and al-Razi (1985,vol.3: 119-120) agree that the colour of this cow is yellow , rich ,pure ,bright and without any blemish .The expression فاقعٌ لونها is used here to emphasize the pure yellow colour of the cow even its horns and hoves.

Yellow colour has a negative connotation when it collocates with plants, whereas it has a positive connotation when it collocates with other things such as the cow .Allah says that the cow is yellow which pleases the onlookers بقرة صفراء فاقع لونها .It is one of the colours which pleases the beholders.

To render the colour expression of this Aya accurately and adequately into English , the connotative meaning of the colour expression بقرة صفراء فاقع لونها should be rendered fully ; otherwise , the rendition will be inaccurate and inadequate . Literal translation can not transfer this connotative meaning , and translators should use the functional translation instead .

Concerning the above renditions ,they all render this Aya and its colour expression in different ways. All their renditions are right , but, unfortunately ,they did not transfer the connotative meaning of the Qur'anic colour expression بقرة صفراء فاقع لونها fully into English. Therefore, we suggest a rendition of our own hoping to provide readers with full connotative meaning of the colour expression . The rendition goes as follows:

They said : Call on ….He said ' verily , He says , the cow should be yellow – coloured ; her colour should be pure , clear , rich , bright , and without any blemish…. '

6.Conclusion

Connotation is one of the most important categories of literary and non-literary discourse ,and it is strongly attached with culture .No colour has a consistent meaning across cultures :what may be neutral in one language, country, etc. may be negative or positive in an another .

This study has investigated the English translations of three colour terms in the Quran ,namely white , green and yellow .It has focused on connotative meanings of such colours and the appropriate way of translating them into English .The connotative meaning of white colour has been found to be the most difficult to translate ,whereas the other two colours ,viz., green and yellow have been seen to pose no problems for the translators .In the face of such insuperable gap , the translator finds himself compelled to one course of action ,namely the functional translation . However , yellow colour expression مصفراً has an identical negative connotation in English and Arabic when it collocates with plants, winds and clouds in the Holy Qu'ran ,therefore, literal translation is a good choice .Whereas it connotes positive meanings when it collocates with the cow in the Holy Qu'ran. Therefore , literal and functional translation have been adopted respectively .The connotative meanings of green colour, on the other hand, have not constituted a problem for the translator ;therefore literal translation has been adopted to render them.

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ترجمة المعاني الإيحائية للتعبيرات اللونية في القران المجيد

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المستخلص

تتناول الدراسة مشكلات ترجمة المعاني الإيحائية للتعبيرات اللونية في القران الكريم. تم دراسة ثلاثة ألوان في البحث وهم اللون الأبيض والأخضر والأصفر . وتم الاستعانة بآراء ثلاثة مفسرين بارزين للقران الكريم وهم ابن كثير والقرطبي والرازي وبعدها تم تقويم ست ترجمات مشهورة لآيات التعبيرات اللونية في القران.استعرض البحث دراسات سابقة تناولت الموضوع في اللغة الانجليزية والعربية على حد سواء

وجدت الدراسة إن اللون الأبيض له معانٍ إيحائية سلبية في اللغة الانجليزية والعربية عندما يصاحب أسماء أجزاء الجسم البشري وخاصةً" اليد " أو قد يتضمن إشارة إلى مرض،ولكن إذا كان البياض الهيٌ لن يصاحبه أي معنىً إيحائي لمرضٍ أو سوءٍ. أما اللون الأصفر فيتطابق معناه الإيحائي السلبي في كلتا اللغتين إذا جاء مصاحباً للنبات ولكنه ذا معنىً إيحائي ايجابي عندما يأتي مصاحباً لكلمة"البقرة ". وللون الأخضر نفس المعنى الإيحائي والدلالي في كلتا اللغتين.