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Stages of Translation from Arabic to Albanian: Factors and Challenges in Communicating the Islamic call (da'wa)

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Abstract

Objective: The study of the translation of Arabic literature into the Albanian language for the purposes of the Islamic call began as early as the first years when the Albanian regions in the Balkans embraced Islam. From that time, due to the need to learn the religion, individuals were either compelled to learn Arabic themselves or have certain texts translated for them. This study serves as a significant motive and resource in relation to the postmodern and post-truth era. If we refer to historical phases, we will observe that the majority of translated literature over time has been religious, with only a few exceptions, particularly in the literature of the *Bejtexhinjtë* (albanian muslim poets). This underscores the pivotal role of religious texts in shaping the cultural and spiritual understanding of albanian muslims, while also reflecting the limited but notable influence of secular and poetic works from the same period. *Theoric Framework:* Studies identify and analyze the Arabic literature into the Albanian language for the purposes of the Islamic call and the objective recognition of the role of the translation s in the formation and intercultural, educational, social and national transformations in albanian society. *Methods:* The method used in this research is the quantitative method in the form of content analysis of works published in the field of social sciences. The issue of challenges is never one-sided or directed at a single aspect; rather, it spans multiple segments: the translated work, the linguistic culture of the translator, the quality of publication, etc. *Results and Conclusions:* At the conclusion, we will present findings and recommendations to offer researchers and future scholars a comprehensive overview of the challenges and issues in Albanian translation studies from Arabic. *Implications of research:* This study is focused on nationwide internal needs, to emphasize those features that unite Albanians and to preserve their identity from external influences.

Keywords: Translation, Arabic, Education, Da'wa, Albanian, Challenges.

Introduction

The art of translating literature from Arabic (the language of the Prophet) into Albanian represents a complex and intricate process that requires extensive linguistic skills and an in-depth understanding of both the language and the cultural and contextual circumstances of the original text. Given that Arabic and Albanian possess different grammatical and linguistic structures, translators face various challenges that demand creativity and expertise to ensure the original message is preserved. The translation process encompasses several stages, starting with initial preparation and research, progressing through translation, and culminating in final review and linguistic correction. Maintaining balance between these stages is crucial for achieving accuracy and quality in the translation. Factors influencing this process include the translator's linguistic and cultural knowledge, as well as the available resources and tools for translation.

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Generally, research translation is thought of as a unidirectional pathway from researchers to other audiences. However, we feel it is important to consider the term as also encompassing the translation of policy and practice priorities and evidence gaps to inform the work of researchers. Research translation, therefore, is a dynamic, iterative process that occurs throughout the research cycle (Cihir, 2012:25).

A common understanding of the term focuses on the communication side - it is either a process that transforms research findings into a form that is comprehensible and relevant to research users or a process that conveys the interest and concerns of users to researchers (Hirschhorn & Geelan, 2008)

Research translation is a necessary process to overcome the “knowledge-to-action gap” (also known as the “research policy gap” or “research-practice gap”). This gap refers to the disconnect between evidence and real-life applications, as well as the lack of use or uptake of research results by its intended audience. The disconnect may occur due to the lack of knowledge of users’ research interests, the lack of a clear audience for particular research results, a lack of communication between researchers and users, and the lack of uptake of research results by the relevant actors (Graham et al., 2006, Oliver et al., 2014).

Knowledge translation interventions that focus on narrowly defined supply-side, demand-side or intermediary actions are not the most effective: they don’t address system-level weaknesses and shortfalls. This understanding warrants a wider perspective on this matter, a more systemic one. These systems, which are shaped equally by cultural and non-cultural factors, are the main contexts currently influencing knowledge translation outcomes so it’s important that they’re understood. (Siregar, 2024).

Too many factors influence the quality of translation. It depends on a number of factors, some of which, as Phillips (1960:290) says, may be beyond the researcher’s control. In those cases where the researcher and the translator are the same person the quality of translation is influenced by factors such as: the autobiography of the researcher-translator; the researcher’s knowledge of the language and the culture of the people under study (Vulliamy, 1990:166); and the researcher’s fluency in the language of the write-up. When the researcher and the translator are not the same person, the quality of translation is influenced mainly by three factors: the competence, the autobiography and what Temple (1997:610) calls ‘the material circumstances’ of the translator, that is the position the translator holds in relation to the researcher.

On those occasions where two languages do not offer direct lexical equivalence several researchers and linguists suggest that one’s efforts should be directed ‘towards obtaining conceptual equivalence without concern for lexical comparability’ (Deutscher, 1968:337; Whyte and Braun, 1968:121; Bassnett-McGuire, 1980; Overing, 1987; Broadfoot and Osborn, 1993; Temple, 1997:610). For many researchers (Sechrest et al., 1972; Brislin et al., 1973; Warwick and Osherson, 1973) the process of gaining comparability of meanings is greatly facilitated by the researcher (or the translator) having not only ‘a proficient understanding of a language’ but also, as Frey (1970) puts it, an ‘intimate’ knowledge of the culture. (Nirwana, 2024)

The advantage of literal translation is that it has adapted the source language to the target language in its grammatical form. The disadvantage of the literal translation method is that it cannot always capture the true meaning of Qur’anic verses because it focuses on the meaning of individual words rather than the overall context (García-Arenal & Starczewska, 2014). In addition, this method can also result in inaccurate or poorly context-appropriate

translations due to differences in Language and vocabulary(Rane, 2023). Therefore, a good interpretation and proper context are needed to avoid the drawbacks of this metho

Furthermore, translating religious materials, such as those related to Islamic teachings, requires special sensitivity to the theological and spiritual nuances of the text. Translators must be well-prepared not only linguistically but also theologically to ensure that the deep messages and meanings are preserved in the target language. The journal "Dituria Islame", considers Muslimanism as the number one spiritual factor of affirming and preserving the Albanian national identity, in the face of the pressures and policies of others. (Fuga, 2008:175; Murati, 2003:34).

This paper will explore the key stages of the translation process from Arabic to Albanian, the factors affecting this process, and the main challenges faced by translators. The analysis aims to enhance the understanding of the complexities involved in translation and to provide guidance for practitioners in the field.

The objective of this study is to analyze and investigate the impact and role of translating literature from Arabic into Albanian, as well as its influence on linguistic and religious structure, communication, and development. This process contributes to the strengthening of Albanian cultural values during the epochal changes that occurred throughout history.

Before delving into the specifics of translation from Arabic to Albanian, it is worth briefly discussing the origins of translation among the Arabs themselves.

In the city of Aleppo (modern-day Syria), a manuscript dating back to 513 has been found, written (or translated) in three languages: Ancient Greek, Syriac, and Arabic. Among other details, the manuscript lists the names of the men who built the church where the manuscript was discovered (Baker & Hana, 2009). This represents the first documented translation among the Arabs prior to Islam. After the acceptance of Islam, the Arabs undertook several translation projects.

The true scientific translation activity among the Arabs began during the Umayyad dynasty (622 CE). During this period, many scientific books were translated into Arabic. Khalid ibn Yazid ibn Muawiya (704 CE), after his departure from power, turned to learning and science, particularly chemistry, due to his fascination with valuable subterranean resources. He then ordered Greek scholars in Alexandria to translate chemistry books from Ancient Greek into Arabic, as well as to translate Aristotle's "Organon" – a collection of books on logic. (Neshshar, 1965). This marked the first official initiative among Muslim Arabs to translate works of such high level. The translation activity continued to expand rapidly, and from then on, translation among the Arabs gained unstoppable momentum.

Translation among Albanians has a historical lineage that reflects the broader context of the linguistic and cultural evolution of the region. The practice of translation in the Albanian language dates back to the early documents of the language. One of the earliest examples is the baptismal formula (1462), a universal Christian rite translated into Albanian. Additionally, the 1497 dictionary compiled by the Austrian guide Arnold von Harfite plays a significant role in the history of translation. These early works, along with subsequent lexicographic contributions, laid the foundation for Albanian translation studies.

Noteworthy in the development of Albanian translation are the pioneering efforts of figures such as Buzuku, who translated the ecclesiastical work "Meshari" (1555), Budi with his translation

"*Doktrina e krishterë*" (1618), Bardhi with the lexicographic "*Fjalor latinisht-shqip*," and Bogdani, collectively referred to as the 'four Bs' by Vedat Kokona. These early translations predominantly pertain to religious texts, reflecting the primary focus of translation activities in this period. (Tupja, 2000).

The translation from Albanian to Arabic has contributed to the advancement of Albanian society in all spheres, particularly in the field of religious studies. The state of Kosovo is defined by its Constitution as a secular state, which promotes the culture of secularism at various levels. The majority of Kosovars are Muslim, but there are also Catholic and Eastern Orthodox minorities. In the most recent population census in 2011, answering the question about religion was not mandatory. However, the majority in Kosovo declared themselves as Muslim (96%), followed by Catholics at 2.21%, Orthodox at 1.49%; others at 0.07%, non-religious at 0.07%, and 0.06% preferred not to answer. (Suma, 2018:223).

In the context of Arabic to Albanian translation, it is crucial to note that early translations were also primarily of a religious nature, with limited examples of literary works. This translation effort significantly aided Islamic preachers (da'wa) in the dissemination and interpretation of Arabic texts in Albanian, particularly the Quran.

The art of translating Arabic literature into Albanian, especially within the domain of Islamic call (da'wa), requires a nuanced approach due to the sensitivity surrounding the religious and spiritual content of the texts. Translators must be adept not only in linguistic aspects but also in theological understanding to ensure that translations are both accurate and comprehensible. Analyzing the text in its original context involves studying its content, understanding its deep meanings, and considering the socio-cultural circumstances in which it was created and published. Furthermore, translating religious texts requires a careful examination of religious concepts and notions derived from the specific worldview of the Arabic language, aiming to preserve the authenticity of the original Arabic texts.

Literature Review

The process of translating from Arabic to Albanian is primarily a linguistic phenomenon, yet its origins are deeply rooted in extralinguistic factors. This translation process did not initially arise from linguistic motives but from the practical needs of early Muslims to access sacred texts and other religious literature. Consequently, the roots of translation from Arabic into Albanian can be traced back to the period of the spread of Islam into Albanian-speaking regions, particularly in the 15th century.

During this period, alongside the use of translation as a means to comprehend the religion, Albanian Muslims adopted the Arabic script. This adoption occurred because, at that time, non-Muslims in the region used the Greek script. The absence of a concept of nationalism meant that religious transformations also influenced shifts in 'national' and cultural identities. According to the Albanian orientalist Hasan Kaleshi, Albanians who converted to Islam, in the absence of their own script, adopted the Arabic alphabet. This religious impetus led them to learn to read the Quran, as most of them were unfamiliar with other forms of writing. They began to use this script for everyday communication, which evolved further over time. (Kaleshi, 2015). Initially, they learned only the Quran, then used the Arabic script for daily communication, and eventually began to learn the Arabic language itself. However, our focus is specifically on the translation aspect. Given this context, it is likely that the first translation from Arabic into Albanian was the translation of the Quran itself. This early translation was almost certainly partial and not written;

rather, it involved the oral transmission of selected verses or short chapters. Examining the Islamic tradition in Albania reveals that it was customary for every Muslim attending a mekteb (religious school) to memorize the last ten chapters of the Quran. Teachers would also provide translations of these chapters, and they were recited during Taraweeh prayers to facilitate widespread memorization among the community.

Within the scope of publications translated from Arabic into Albanian, there are numerous books and works. In the field of tafsir (Quranic exegesis), notable contributions include those by Sabri Bajgora, whose work has been featured in periodicals such as "Dituria Islame" (Islamic Knowledge), "Edukata Islame" (Islamic Education), and "Takvim." In the domain of aqeedah (Islamic theology), we have the book "Material evidence for the existence of God" by Muteveli Esharavi, published in 2009 and translated by Sabri Bajgora. In the area of Islamic da'wah (invitation to Islam), "The Jurisprudence of priorities" by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, translated by Rexhep Suma, is a key work. This book explores and analyzes various balances from a legal perspective in the evaluation of issues, ideas, and actions within Islamic da'wah. It serves as a guide for practitioners of Islamic da'wah in prioritizing their efforts. (Suma,2019:123; Mehdiu,2019:42, Qazimi,2019:92, Shkodra,2019:60).

Stages of Translation of Arabic Literature into Albanian

As previously mentioned, Arabic literature gradually penetrated the Albanian language. To provide a clearer picture of the development of Arabic literature translation into Albanian, we will divide it into several important stages, primarily based on events that occurred within the Albanian context:

The Initial Stage

This stage includes the period when Arabs and Turks migrated to Albanian territories for trade and missionary purposes, marking the first contacts between Albanians and Arabs, and the initial spread of Islam in these regions. This contact began as early as the 9th century AD (Ibrahimi, 2009), with a significant influx in the 14th century. During this period, any translation for religious or commercial needs was performed orally.

Additionally, this period covers the beginning of the establishment of Ottoman administration in Albanian territories. The Ottoman administration, aside from using Ottoman Turkish as the official language, employed Arabic in many segments. Therefore, to understand these parts, Albanians needed translations. However, no written translations from this period have survived.

The Era of the Bejtexhinj – Religion Challenged Nationalism

After Albanians largely embraced the Islamic faith, they began to receive education in Islamic centers around the world, especially in Istanbul. At this point, they also started contributing to Islamic spheres academically, with some writing in the Ottoman language, others in Arabic and Persian, and some writing in Arabic script but in the Albanian language. Alongside writing, this period saw the translation of major works of the Islamic faith and oriental literature in general into Albanian, particularly Persian, Arabic, and Ottoman literature. Unfortunately, few of these works have survived or are still unstudied in archives.

In the era of old Albanian literature, specifically in the literature of the bejtexhinj (poets), many works were also translated from oriental languages, mainly poetry and religious-themed poems. For illustration, we will mention some of them: Muhamed Kuçuku translated from Arabic a Kaside Byrba, and we also have poems dedicated to the death of Muhammad (PBUH), one to

Isa (Jesus), and one to Man. From M. Kyçyk, we also have another work translated from Turkish titled "Terk-us-salavat" (He who abandons the prayer) with 416 verses, a Mevlud, a Binamaz, and a Risale e Birgjevi (Hysa, 2000). Among the mevluds, during the period of the bejtexhinj, specifically in 1879, Sulejman Çelebi's mevlud was translated into Albanian (in Arabic script) by the Albanian Hafiz Ali Ulqinaku (Ulqinaku, 1975).

The literature of the bejtexhinj represents the cultural output of a social class that emerged and was educated in Islamic religious schools, often in foreign languages. Despite this linguistic factor, it had a relatively minor impact on their national identity, linguistic awareness, and their contribution to national literature. It is important to note that this literature evolved through the work of exceptionally talented poets who developed their literary consciousness by integrating Arab, Turkish, and Persian cultural elements with our own folk traditions. (Hysa, 2000a:54, Hysa, 2000b:55; Hysa, 1997, 111).

As evident from the above, during this period, both literary and religious works were translated, in contrast to the present day when only religious texts are predominant. Another notable phenomenon is the authorial poetry of Albanian writers, which was inspired by poems, poetry, and ghazals in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman languages. In many instances, these writers produced modified translations that subsequently appeared as original works. For example, Naim's "Qerbelanë" and Muhamed Çam Kyçyk's "Jusufi e Zeliha" are such instances.

The education of a large number of young people in the Ottoman and Arabic languages, along with the affluent class's interest in poetry and the stable social environment, inevitably created a substantial community eager for knowledge and capable of understanding literature written in Albanian using the Arabic script, known as *Aljamiado* poetry.

A significant number of young graduates from madrasas in Albanian cities such as Berat and Elbasan, as well as other towns, pursued higher education in Istanbul, Egypt, and various institutions across the Ottoman Empire.

This led to a growing number of educated individuals, as those who had completed higher studies abroad returned to their native lands. Among them were notable poets who contributed to Albanian *Aljamiado* poetry, such as Nezim Frakulla, Hasan Zyko Kamberi, and Muhamed Çami-Kyçku.

Furthermore, the large number of mosques, *mesjids*, *teqes* (Sufi lodges), along with madrasas and primary schools, fostered a religious and intellectual elite. This elite class derived its livelihood from religious leadership and the administration of governmental affairs, thus laying the groundwork for the development of a new Albanian literature using the Arabic alphabet. (Krasniqi, 2010:213).

A challenge of this period was the absence of an indigenous Albanian script, which diminished the motivation for extensive translation activities. Instead, given the use of Arabic script, it was deemed more practical to teach the Arabic language itself, as it facilitated understanding of religious texts.

It is also important to highlight that Albanian nationalist sentiments were not significantly developed at that time, particularly during the early period up to the 18th century. Consequently, there was no strong nationalistic motive for literary translation. The emphasis was on providing access to knowledge and science, regardless of the language. At that time, proficiency in the languages that dominated global discourse was considered a privilege.

Translation has been a successful tool for Islamic da'wah (invitation). Among Islamic scholars and preachers, there is no unified stance regarding the immutability of the methods and means used in Islamic da'wah (invitation). Some reasons for this disagreement stem from a generalized judgment on many issues without a more detailed explanation and clear determination of the specific matter at hand. This sometimes arises due to different interpretations of terms, which leads to issues being mixed with one another, and each person judges according to their own perspective or the definition they base their judgment on. This intertwining of issues results in a divergence of opinions. (Al-Araur, 2009:230)

This period began to decline with the rise of nationalism, particularly with the nationalistic writings of the Rilindas (Renaissance figures). The end of this period is marked by the declaration of Albanian state independence in 1912.

The Era of Independence – Surge of translations

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Muslims in the Balkans, including Albanians, were immersed in various conflicts as the Ottoman Empire, of which they were a part, was in decline. This period was not conducive to scientific progress or translation activities. Nevertheless, even during this time, there was some written and translated material. During this period, many Islamic works were translated from Arabic. Among these are the works of Hafiz Ali Korça. (Ahmedi, 2006), who translated portions of the Quran into Albanian and the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, among other works; Abdullah Zemblaku, who translated numerous texts; and Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, among others.

The most vigorous period of translation from Arabic occurred after 1923, the year the Albanian Muslim Community (KMSH) was established. During this epoch, KMSH leaders undertook formal initiatives to translate works from Arabic. Among these initiatives were the magazines “*Zani i Naltë*” and “*Kultura Islame*,” which featured excellent translations from Arabic. The translations published in these journals, overseen by KMSH, primarily focused on Islamic teachings but also included philosophical, literary, linguistic, and historical works.

This period can be considered to have ended in 1945, with the takeover of Albania by the Albanian People's Party and the establishment of the notorious communist regime under Enver Hoxha.

From the declaration of Albanian independence in 1912 until 1945, Albanians faced several challenges in translating works from Arabic. Initially, one challenge was the reluctance of some Albanians to accept the Latin alphabet. Although this was a significant challenge at the beginning of independence, it became less of an issue by the end of this period. The primary challenges were political, as Albania experienced continuous instability due to invasions by Serbs, Italians, Germans, and ultimately fell under communist rule.

The Communist Era – Translation from Arabic as a Synonym for Crime

During the communist era, anti-Islamic policies in the Balkans were both severe and relentless. Initially, Muslim-majority regions were fragmented, and a harsh political system was implemented to eradicate Islamic cultural elements: mosques were demolished, mektebs (Islamic schools) were destroyed, educational institutions were dismantled, books were burned, manuscripts were obliterated, scholars were persecuted, and religious leaders were disparaged. The animosity that had been directed at the Ottoman Empire for centuries was now turned against the Muslims of the Balkans in the previous century.

During this period, the fate of Albanian Muslims diverged significantly, and their intellectual and historical developments began to evolve separately depending on the state in which they resided. In Albania, the situation was particularly dire. By 1967, religion was officially banned by law (Basha, 2011), effectively suffocating any form of religious practice or scholarship. Albanian Muslims within Albania faced extreme repression and were not allowed any religious or scholarly expression.

In contrast, Albanian Muslims living outside the Albanian political state, particularly in Yugoslavia, experienced different conditions. The situation for them was somewhat less restrictive, though still subject to significant censorship. In Yugoslavia, the translation of Arabic texts into Albanian continued, albeit under challenging circumstances. Notable contributions came from certain scholars in the region.

For instance, scholars from the “*Alaudin*” madrasa in Pristina and the “*Isa Beu*” madrasa in Skopje played a crucial role in translating works from Arabic. Additionally, the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Pristina also contributed to translating Arabic literature, language, and history. These institutions primarily focused on religious literature, while the University of Pristina's department covered a broader range of subjects.

In Albania, any religious activity, including the mere act of performing a religious ritual, was punishable by death. Consequently, publicist and publishing activities related to the Arab world or translations from Arabic were completely stifled. In contrast, Albanian Muslims in Yugoslavia faced societal and state-imposed challenges, where engaging with Arabic language and literature was often viewed as backward and inferior, a perception fostered by the monist system in place. Nizwar, M., Ismail, I., Purnama, E., & Yahya, A. (2024); Nurkanti, M., & Yasundari. (2024).

Another significant challenge for Arabic translation during this period was financial. There were severe restrictions on funding or publishing books translated from Arabic or with religious content. Despite these considerable pressures, Albanian historiography managed to achieve some notable translations of the Quran into Albanian during this time.

Post-Communist Era – Focus on Religious Translations

The 1990s marked a political shift for both Albania and Yugoslavia (now North Macedonia), which subsequently benefited publishing activities. The fall of communism in Albania and socialism in Yugoslavia created better opportunities for translation from Arabic. In the past two decades, many publishing houses have been established, and numerous books have been translated from Arabic. While it is impractical to count all the translated books, which number in the thousands (Gjinaj, Gurra, Bezhani & Shahini, 2006-2007), I will focus on the types and nature of the translations. Over 90% of the literature translated from Arabic in these recent decades is Islamic religious literature. Why is this the case? One reason is that these Muslims suffered for half a century, and now, to fulfill that need, they turned predominantly to religious literature from Arabic.

During the communist period, many students of religion studied in the Arab world. Consequently, their return to their homeland led them to focus on translating what they had studied.

With the establishment of the Department of Oriental Studies in Pristina, a second wave of translations emerged, distinct from the first by its broader scope and its direct translations from

Arabic to Albanian. This wave introduced several prominent figures, such as Hasan Kaleshi, Feti Mehdiu, Shemsi Ajvazi, Ismail Ahmeti, Muhamed Mufaku, Abdullah Hamiti, among others.

When examining the body of Arabic literature translated into Albanian, we see that it covers a wide geographical range, from Morocco to Lebanon and from Syria to Sudan, including poetry, short stories, and novels. In the realm of poetry, approximately 130 Arab poets are represented, from Imru' al-Qays to Mahmoud Darwish, who accounts for the highest number of translations.

The largest number of poets come from Palestine (22 poets), followed by Algeria (19 poets), Syria (15 poets), and Morocco (2 poets). In the field of prose, there are approximately 60 authors of short stories and novels, ranging from Syria (26 authors) to Yemen (one author).

One potential explanation for the disparity in representation may lie in the availability of selected prose collections centered around specific regions, such as the anthology "Syrian Stories," published in 1982. In conclusion, it is important to note that the subsequent period (1983-2008) holds significant importance and warrants independent study. Lastly, the influence of these translations can be observed in contemporary Kosovar literature. (Mufaku,2012).

The focus on religious literature is also related to commercial aspects. Most publishing houses and books published received support from the Arab world, specifically from Arab associations, which aimed to spread only religion and faith, with little emphasis on culture, literature, or history. In short, they financed their ideology in our regions. This led to a polarization between publishing houses and translated Arabic books. The problems experienced in the East also arrived in our midst. These often-unconscious actions caused Albanians to lose their religious-Islamic identity, which had been developed over five centuries and was well-formed in the first half of the 19th century.

Translation of the Quran among Albanians

Although Albanians first encountered the Quran as early as the Middle Ages, and after embracing Islam, they not only became acquainted with it but also produced numerous figures who dedicated themselves to its study, memorization, and dissemination. In addition, several prominent individuals from among the Albanian people made significant contributions to the field of Quranic studies. However, due to a variety of historical and social circumstances, Albanians engaged in the translation of the Noble Quran relatively late compared to other nations, whether of the Islamic faith or non-Muslim populations. (Bajgora,2021).

The translation of the Quran is a highly sensitive and important matter, as it not only conveys the meanings, miracles, and concepts of the Quran to non-Arab Muslims in the most accurate way possible, but it also carries significant risks. A mistranslation or inaccurate rendering of the text can distort the true message of the Quran, leading to misunderstandings about Islam. Many people have embraced Islam after reading translations of the Quran, while others have strengthened their faith and understanding of Islam by reflecting on its meanings through translations in their native languages. However, there are also those who have been led astray due to inadequate translations of Quranic verses. The reasons for inaccurate translations are varied. In some cases, the translator may have good intentions but lacks a strong command of either the Arabic language or their native language. In other instances, the translator may have ulterior motives, being biased or lacking objectivity and fairness in conveying the true meanings of the Quranic text. (Jusufo,2020,Kariç,2005:50, Mehdiu,1978:238, Mehdiu:1996:76).

The first translations of Quranic texts into Albanian were done by the great Albanian poet Naim Frashëri in his book *The Essence of the Quran*, published in the collection *Teachings* in Bucharest in 1894. As for the translation of the Quran into Albanian, *The Quran (Recitation)* without commentary was done by our Rilindas, the Christian Orthodox Ilo Mitkë Qafëzezi in 1921 in Ploiești, Romania. This translation covered one-third of the text, including the first six chapters (suras) of the Quran. Qafëzezi was one of the distinguished Albanian publicists in Romania. He primarily based his translation on the English translation of the Quran by the orientalist George Sale (1697-1736), which was reprinted in 2007 in standard English. The translation, without the original Arabic text, has 126 pages in a 22 x 14 cm format and is in the southern dialect. With this translation, Qafëzezi aimed to highlight "what is that mysterious veil that separates Albanian Muslim believers from their Christian brothers. (Qafzezi,1921).

Partial translations of the Quran are also available from our theologian and patriot Hafiz Ali Korça, titled "*The Glorious Quran and its Essence*, published by the "*Ora e Shkodrës*" printing house in 1926. However, due to financial reasons, he interrupted the publication, even though he had completed the translation in 1920 (2000 pages). He continued to publish other parts in the Islamic press of the time, such as in the journal "*Zani i Naltë*" as a commentator rather than a translator, and later also in "*Kultura Islame*". The original Arabic text was included alongside the translation, demonstrating his good understanding of scientific and translation methodology and the responsibility of scientific work. It was published by *Logos Publishing House* in 2006. During his lifetime, it is said that he completed the translation of the entire Quran into Albanian, but unfortunately, this publication did not survive the communist era.

Later, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu translated the Quran with commentary, titled *The Essence of the Meanings of the Glorious Quran*, and was published in an improved, edited, revised, and adapted version for contemporary Albanian in Tirana in 2005. This translation, like others, was not complete. The publication is in a 70x100/16 format and was printed by the "Lilo" printing house, with 836 pages. This translation took about 13 years, is more comprehensive, and was done by a highly skilled expert in Islamic theology and Quranic interpretation from all previous editions.

"There is evidence that attempts were made to translate the Quran into Albanian several times. During the 1930s, a working committee composed of 12 well-known theologians was formed in the Albanian Muslim Community in Tirana to translate the Quran into Albanian. After several years of work, on the brink of the 1950s, the committee managed to produce a very serious translation both in terms of the fidelity to its content and its linguistic accuracy. This manuscript is now found in the KMSH archive in Tirana. (Zekaj,2002).

"This translation includes the original Arabic text and, to assist readers, a Latin script transcription starting from the middle of the page, an accurate translation of the original, and explanatory notes at the end. Unfortunately, this translation also did not see the light of day; until recently, it was deposited in the state archives where it is still partially found. (Basha,1996).

There have been other attempts at translation as well, including those by Abdulla Zemblaku (during the years 1930-34), Ferit Vokopola who translated parts of the Quran through French into Albanian, as well as Sherif Putra, Haki Sharofi, Sadik Bega, and others. Another Quran translation that remained in manuscript form comes from Sheh Jahja Shehu from Gjakova, titled *The Glorified Quran*, published in 1982 with 951 A4 pages typed on a typewriter. This translation does not even remotely meet the standard of the Albanian language and was not translated from Arabic but from Serbo-Croatian, based on the translations of Ali Riza Karabeg and Panda Čaushević, published in Mostar in 1937.

It was not until 1985 that Professor Feti Mehdiu completed the full translation of the Quran into Albanian, titled *Kur'an-i Kerim*. It was published by the Presidency of the Islamic Community of Kosovo in 1985, spanning 880 pages, and had a significant impact on Albanian journalism. It was published in 10,000 copies in A5 format. The book contains only the translation of the verses into Albanian, without the original text.

In 1988, Professor Hasan I. Nahi followed with a second complete translation of the Quran, titled *The Glorified Quran*. The publisher is the author himself, and it includes 610 pages of translation and 34 additional pages containing the preface, a word about the translation, a biography of Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the contents according to the number of surahs and themes. This translation is done from Arabic and follows the same right-to-left direction as the original text.

Later, Haxhi Sherif Ahmeti translated the Quran with commentary, titled *The Essence of the Meanings of the Glorious Quran*, published in 1988 with 904 pages. This was published by the Presidency of the Islamic Community of Kosovo. This translator paid extraordinary attention to the interpretative aspect and fidelity of the content through clear and precise language. This edition included the translation in Albanian alongside the sacred text. According to scholars, this translation is among the most comprehensive of the holy book. It includes both the translation of the verses and a commentary with an overview of the Quran. This translation has had wide circulation and has been published several times. In Medina in 1993, one million copies were printed, and it has also been published twice in Cairo, Rome, Riyadh, Dubai, London, and Pristina.

Another translation comes from Pakistan, titled *The Holy Quran: Translation and Commentary*, by Muhammad Zekeriya Khan, who studied the Albanian language at the University of Pristina in 1990. The publication has 930 pages and was issued by Islam Internacional Publications (LTD, Islamabad). The translator attempts to provide explanations of the verses but is far from meeting the standard of content. Despite being a new message in the field of translation, it has broken all Quranic norms, as well as the norms of the Arabic language, and is entirely biased with distortions of many Quranic verses, adapting them to the Ahmadi movement, which is known for its incorrect stance on basic Islamic principles and teachings. This translation has not been used by Albanian scholars as a primary source.

The next translation comes from a group of translators from Darussalam Publishing House in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, titled *Explanation of the Meanings of the Glorious Quran in Albanian* by Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, published in 2000 with 973 pages, including the original text, verse by verse. Emin Imer from Skopje completed and published his translation of the Quran, titled *The Quran*, in Istanbul in 2007, based on the Turkish version and occasionally using some translations from Albanian. This translation has 612 pages and 12 additional pages with framed text. It contains no other notes.

The next translation is titled *The Glorious Quran: Attempt to Understand* by Avdi Berisha from the Bosnian language. The comments and notes are by Džemaludin Čaušević, with the original text framed.

Another translation is by Alban Fejza, translated from English, by Rashad Khalifa, published in 2012 with 420 pages, titled *The Authorized Translation of the Quran into Albanian*. He identifies himself as a reformer and self-proclaimed prophet. Based on the translation of one surah, specifically verses 128 and 129, he refuses to acknowledge them as the words of God, so they

do not appear in his translation. This, according to religious provisions, excludes him from the circle of faith, and thus no Islamic school accepts them as part of the religion.

The Quran translation into Albanian by Selim Sylejmani was made from the Bosnian book *The Quran: Translation of Meanings* by Enes Karić. This translation was published in 2011, has 607 pages, and was published by SH.K. Kurani-Kosovo. As the publisher states, this translation follows an easy and suitable style of contemporary Albanian. It preserves the meaning of the original Quran text as much as possible and is written from right to left, just like the original text.

The most recent translation is *The Message of the Quran* by Muhammad Asad, translated into Albanian by Bujar M. Hoxha from English, and published by Logos-A, Skopje, in 2016 with a total of 944 pages. This translation consciously avoids the use of unnecessary archaisms that might obscure the meaning of the Quran for contemporary readers. On the other hand, it was not deemed necessary to formulate Quranic phrases in a deliberately 'modern' idiom, which would conflict with the spirit of the original Arabic and diminish the solemnity of the inherent concept (Asad, 2016).

The Grand Mufti of Albania, Salih Ferhat Hoxha (1917-1995), translated the Quran and titled his work *The Quran with Translation into Albanian*, published by Logos-A in Skopje in 2016, with 611 pages. This translation is characterized by extremely clean language adhering to Albanian standards. The translation by Mufti Hoxha was done in Tirana during the harsh years of Enver Hoxha's regime, which officially banned religion in 1967. He was confined to his home and refused to sign the declaration banning religion or submit to Hoxha's system, working alone during those years to complete this translation into Albanian. The translation is done from the original Arabic, with no influence from other Balkan languages. As stated in the preface by Professor Ismail Ahmeti, "Translating the language and style of the Quran with precision is impossible because the Quranic discourse is highly perfect and rich with stylistic figures. This translation is the culmination of the extensive work of this renowned Albanian Islamic scholar, an Islamic, historical, and civilizational treasure that will serve as an irreplaceable model for future translations of the Quran."

However, later information reveals that the first Quran translator might have been Muharrem Blakçori in 1968 from Peja, though he lived in Kavajë. This translation is in manuscript form and has not yet been published. (Ahmedi, 2016). It has been preserved with zeal by his nephew Xhevdet Blakçori. These translations, whether in manuscript form or dispersed, are a strong foundation for future translations and reflect serious efforts of our nation to include the Quran translation into Albanian within its national culture. However, according to scholar Feti Mehdiu, there are reports of Quran translations in Gjiilan, Peshkopi, and Italy. This delay in translation, compared to other nations, is attributed to the fact that the initiative to translate the Quran into another language was viewed negatively and considered a great sin, even more so because the first translator was a Christian. Despite this, the first complete translation of the Quran in former Yugoslavia was done in 1895 by Miko Ljubibratić–Hercegovac, in Serbo-Croatian, and is the first among the Balkan languages.

"As a matter of curiosity, he did not manage to publish the translation of the Quran while he was alive. He died in 1889 in Belgrade, and it was published in 1895. Next to Ljubibratić's name, there was a cross indicating that the translator had passed away. This cross would have caused a great stir among Muslims. However, Ljuba Stojanević, considering the potential consequences of that cross, advised that it be removed at all costs, as it could be a scandal for Muslims and a

suitable opportunity for Christians to attack us." (Mehdiu, 1978). "Later, the cross was removed from all copies. This translation is in format 21x15, written in the Cyrillic alphabet, has 476 pages, and does not include the original text. Partial translations of the Quran were available between 1921 and 1945, such as Surah Yasin and several shorter surahs. According to bibliographic sources, there are approximately 2,672 translations of the Quran to date. (Zekaj, 2002).

Methodology

The methodology used in this study involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection through three stages: first, through the review and analysis of relevant literature. The research method is primarily descriptive-analytical, aiming to explain the significance and role of translation from Arabic in the religious and identity developments within the Albanian nation. The diversity of translations will necessitate an analytical approach, with the ultimate goal being synthesis—drawing generalizations about the role of translation from Arabic to Albanian in social, political, national, and cultural life and role of translation from Arabic texts for Islamic call and their influential role in society as well as the enhancement of social awareness among the masses. "Strategies of combining methods offer opportunities to use multiple sources of information from multiple approaches to gain knowledge, penetrating the social world to ensure that a potential influence resulting from a particular approach is not repeated in other approaches." (William & Pearce, 2006:19).

Results

Results of Translating Islamic Texts from Arabic to Albanian: Communicating the Islamic Call (Da'wa)

1. Improved Accessibility and Understanding:

Broader Reach: Translating Islamic texts into Albanian makes them accessible to a wider Albanian-speaking audience, including those who may not be fluent in Arabic.

Enhanced Understanding: Effective translation helps Albanian speakers understand Islamic teachings and principles more clearly, promoting better comprehension of the Islamic call (da'wa).

2. Public Reception and Impact:

Positive Reception: Well-executed translations can receive positive feedback from the target audience, reflecting their appreciation for accessible and culturally relevant religious texts.

Informed Public: An informed public with a better understanding of Islamic teachings can lead to more informed discussions and interactions regarding Islam.

3. Increased Religious and Educational Outreach:

Educational Resources: Translations provide valuable educational resources for Islamic studies and religious education in Albanian-speaking communities.

Community Engagement: Improved communication of Islamic principles through translation can lead to increased engagement and participation in religious activities and discussions.

3. Cultural Adaptation and Integration:

Cultural Relevance: Adapted translations ensure that Islamic concepts are presented in a way that resonates with Albanian cultural norms and values, facilitating smoother integration into local contexts.

Reduction of Misunderstandings: By addressing cultural differences and contextualizing concepts, translations help minimize potential misunderstandings and misinterpretations of Islamic teachings.

4. Enhanced Scholarly Dialogue:

Academic Contributions: Translated texts contribute to scholarly research and discussion in the field of Islamic studies by providing Albanian-language sources for analysis and interpretation.

Cross-Cultural Scholarship: Facilitates dialogue between scholars and practitioners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, enriching the global understanding of Islamic thought.

5. Challenges and Solutions:

Linguistic and Cultural Challenges: Identifying and addressing challenges related to linguistic differences and cultural nuances helps improve the accuracy and effectiveness of translations.

Ongoing Improvements: Continuous feedback and revisions contribute to refining translation practices and enhancing the quality of translated materials.

In summary, translating Islamic texts from Arabic to Albanian Communicating the Islamic Call (Da'wa) plays a crucial role in expanding the reach of Islamic teachings, facilitating cultural adaptation, and enhancing religious and educational outreach. While challenges exist, addressing these through careful translation and adaptation practices leads to significant positive outcomes for both the Albanian-speaking community and the broader field of literatures studies.

Conclusions

The translation of religious texts from Arabic into Albanian and his role in Islamic call (dawa) remains a significant aspect of the Albanian scholarly landscape.

While this focus is valuable, it is essential that attention also be directed towards translating professional and foundational Islamic texts, as well as exploring Arabic literature, culture, history, and philosophy.

This comprehensive approach will enhance our understanding of the Islamic faith. This study examines the complexities of translating from Arabic to Albanian, identifying key stages and challenges encountered by translators.

The process of translation between these languages necessitates a profound grasp of both linguistic and cultural elements due to the pronounced differences in grammatical and lexical structures.

The translation process encompasses several critical stages: initial preparation and contextual research, followed by meticulous revision and editing to ensure both accuracy and quality. Influential factors in this process include the translator's expertise, the availability of resources, and technological tools.

This study concludes that the translation of literature from Arabic (particularly Islamic texts) into Albanian involves numerous challenges. Nevertheless, with a methodical approach and ample resources, it is feasible to achieve a translation that is both professional and credible.

Translating religious texts, particularly those related to Islamic teachings, demands a heightened sensitivity to the theological and spiritual dimensions of the original texts.

Translators must possess advanced linguistic and theological skills to maintain the integrity, accuracy, and intended message of the original content.

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