"al-ba<u>h</u>r" in the Holy Quran and Translation Variations: A Study upon Three Translations of the Holy Quran

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Abstract: Recent translation studies principally concentrate on the quality of translation. They also focus on terms and their significance in drawing the scope of meaning. From this point, the present study is launched to explore the translation of the term "bahr" (= sea) in the Holy Quran through three spaced translations; a term that has a special image in Arabic literature and is used in many different situations to address an audience closely connected with desert. Have these translations succeeded in conveying a term that has signified "something" more or less than sea? Through a survey of thirty-nine verses, the study has found out that the broad meaning of the term "bahr" has narrowed down by time which reflects the fact that maintaining term meaning has the main concern even in dealing with authoritative texts. In addition, definiteness is brought to light through this paper as a translation norm mistreated in many cases.

Key words: religious, authoritative, Quran, sea, definiteness.

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البحر في القرآن الكريم واختلافات الترجمة :
دراسة من خلال ثلاث ترجمات للقرآن الكريم

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المستخلص: تركز دراسات الترجمة الحديثة بشكل أساسي علىٰ نوعية الترجمة. كما أنها تركز علىٰ المصطلحات وأهميتها في رسم نطاق المعنىٰ. من هذه النقطة ، تم إطلاق الدراسة الحالية لاستكشاف ترجمة مصطلح «بحر» في القرآن الكريم من خلال ثلاث ترجمات متباعدة زمنيا ؛ وهو مصطلح له صورة خاصة في الأدب العربي استخدم في العديد من السياقات اللغوية لمخاطبة جمهور علىٰ صلة وثيقة بالصحراء. فهل نجحت هذه الترجمات في نقل مصطلح يدل علىٰ «شيء» أكثر أو أقل من البحر؟ من خلال دراسة استقصائية علىٰ تسعة وثلاثين آية ، توصلت الدراسة إلىٰ أن المعنىٰ الواسع لمصطلح «بحر» قد ضاق بمرور الوقت وهو ما يعكس حقيقة أن الحفاظ علىٰ معنىٰ المصطلح هو الشاغل الأكثر أهمية حتىٰ في التعامل مع النصوص ذات القيمة الأدبية العالية. إضافة إلىٰ ما سبق ، يتم تمييز ال المعرفة من الجنسية حيث أخطأتها الترجمة في كثير من الحالات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ديني، موثوق، قرآن، بحر، المعرفة.

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1. Introduction

Perhaps, translators should have the prime concern in seeking for extensive knowledge through which "optimal" translation constitutes the first priority. To achieve this, it is inevitable to know what others have achieved, and how to benefit from these achievements whether we want to improve the translation process or to avoid mishaps that trap even translation experts. From this point, the idea of studying, comparing, and evaluating comes into sight. Comparative in nature, the study critically surveys the term ***bahr*** (*sea* in English), finding out thirty-nine verses which include forty-one terms. Three well-known translations of the Holy Quran (HQ): Ali (1964) (T1), Al-Hilali & Khan (1993) (T2), and Qaribullah & Darwish (2009) (T3) are set respectively along with the Quranic verse text copy-pasted from an authentic site of the HQ (Abdul baqi 1994) with comments on both renditions and definiteness concerning the definite article in most citations to highlight the most appropriate translation that meets the intended discoursal and contextual meaning. In addition, this study seeks to examine whether the translation deviation is a context-related or a human related concern and to verify the consistency of each translation in dealing with repeated terms.

2. Related Literature

Terms constitute the solid ground on which sciences are based. While originators of terms encounter many obstacles of choosing the most suitable term for a concept in their mother tongue, translators endure the impact of many obstacles to attain the image of that term in the target language Enani (1996: 7). It goes without question that meaning is the main concern in translation. In this context, Leech (1983:5) argues that semantics construes both word and sentence meaning based on rules whereas pragmatics concerns much about communicative meaning based on principle. This vision is manifested by Aziz (1998: 138) who concludes that "translation has gone further in meaning: from propositional meaning to the pragmatic meaning." This, in turn, elevates our views from mere words and phrases to the world of ideas and images. Although religious texts always maintain specificity

and sanctity; they, eventually, remain written texts that are governed by linguistic rules to be understood. Dickens, Hervey, and Higgins (2002:178) state: "The subject matter of religious texts implies the existence of a spiritual world that is not fictive, but has its own external realities and truths." Elewa (2014:32) admits that, "The transfer of religious texts from one language to another involves, among other things, the scientific study of language, including phonology, morphology, lexis, and semantics". The Holly Quran, a rich text with unique realms of implications, overwhelms them with flowing meanings. Aziz and Lataiwish (2000:102) argue that religious texts concerning form and content may exhibit identical significance. The message expressed in a religious text principally depends on faith in addition to the information encapsulated in the message, and the way this information is conveyed.

3. Discussion

Before we start looking at the three renditions of each of the following verses, let us consider the norms of translating religious texts in general and the translation of the Holy Quran in specific. In the first place, translators prioritize formal equivalence at the expense of the other types of equivalence i.e. functional and ideational because they feel that it is more faithful to the origin and maintains creative metaphors whose formal rendition is as noteworthy as the conveyance of the messages they encapsulate (for more details, see Farghal and Shunnaq 1999: 9-17). Illyas (1989:89) argues that the translation of religious texts calls for extra concern when they are rendered because of their sacredness. This entails formal equivalence predilection. Besides, translators feel extra cautious in dealing with religious texts because of the sanctity of the text which may create language that seems unusual for many interested readers. Definiteness is very significant in the translation of nouns as it sheds light on the noun scope of meaning which is a crucial requirement in translation. The noun *ba<u>h</u>r* in its singular, dual and plural forms: ***al-ba<u>h</u>r, ba<u>h</u>r, al-ba<u>h</u>raan, al-ba<u>h</u>rain, and Ab<u>h</u>ur*** has been mentioned forty one times in thirty nine verses in the HQ. It occurred thirty three times in singular,

five times in dual and three times in plural forms. (Two verses contained the term ***bahr*** twice: Al-Kahf: 109, no. 20 and Luqman: 27, no. 26 below).

Mukhtar Alsahah dictionary defines the term ***bahr*** as:

– البَحْرُ ضد البرّ قيل سمي به لعمقه واتساعه والجمع أَبْحُرٌ و بِحَارٌ و بُحُورٌ وكل نهر عظيم بحر.

Sea is the antonym of land, said to be so for being deep and extended, pl. abhor, behaar and buhuur. Every great river is a sea.

My Translation (MT)

Lesaan Al-Arab dictionary says that the meaning of the term ***muhiit*** is:

– البَحْرُ الَّذِي يُحِيطُ بِالْيَابِسَةِ. تُغَطِّي الْمُحِيطَاتُ مَا يُقَارِبُ مِنْ ثُلْثَيِ الكُرَةِ الأَرْضِيَّةِ الْمُحِيطُ الهَادِي والْمُحِيطُ الهِنْدِيُّ والْمُحِيطُ الأَطْلَسِيُّ ...

It is the sea that surrounds land. Oceans cover nearly two-thirds of the globe: the Pacific, the Indian, the Atlantic ... (MT)

Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines the term *sea* as:
1a: a great body of salt water that covers much of the earth *broadly*: the waters of the earth as distinguished from the land and air
b: a body of salt water of second rank more or less landlocked the Mediterranean *sea*.

It also defines *ocean* as:
1a: the whole body of salt water that covers nearly three fourths of the surface of the earth.
b: any of the large bodies of water (such as the Atlantic Ocean) into which the great ocean is divided.

For definiteness it is worthwhile to bear in mind that the definite article (the / أل) makes up a tricky question in translation between Arabic and English. Arabic utilizes the definite article both generically

(1a and 1b below) and referentially (1c and 1d below) with nouns in singular and plural forms, whereas English resorts to the zero article to attain generic use (2b below). Moreover, English doesn't employ the definite article to refer to the whole class (2c below). (for more details, see Farghal and Shunnaq 1999: 49-52).

1. a) al-kitaab-u mufiid-un
   DEF-book-NOM useful-NOM
   "The book is useful."
   b) al-kutub-u mufiidat-un
   DEF-book (pl) NOM useful-NOM
   "Books are useful."
   c) hal qara't-a al-kitaab-a
   DEF-book-NOM
   'Have you read the book?'
   d) hal qara't-a al-kutub-a
   DEF-book (pl) NOM
   'Have you read the books?'
2. a) The book is useful.
   b) Books are useful.
   c) *The books are useful.

In the following section, the term **_bahr_** along with its three renditions is set then discussion is raised.

1– "أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ..." (النور:40)

bahr in number 1 is rendered as:

T1: 1. Or (the unbelievers' state) is like the depths of darkness in a vast deep **ocean**…

(Al-Nur: 40)

T2: 1. Or [the state of a disbeliever] is like the darkness in a vast deep **sea**…

(Al-Nur: 40)

T3: 1. Or, they are like darkness upon a deep **sea**…

(Al-Nur: 40)

Considering the contextual meaning of the term **ba_h_r** in the verse above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **sea** as it generally denote any sea. T2 and T3 render the noun correctly, whereas T1 overtranslates it by opting for the term ocean (for more details, see Wang 2012: 129-133). The term is employed generically as it doesn't refer to a specific identity. Fortunately, the noun is used generically by all.

2– أ) "وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ **الْبَحْرَ** فَأَنجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ" (البقرة: 50)

al-ba_h_r in number 2- a is rendered as:

T1: 2. And remember We divided **the sea** for you…

(Al-Baqarah: 50)

T2: 2. And (remember) when We separated **the sea** for you…

(Al-Baqarah: 50)

T3: 2. We parted **the sea** for you …

(Al-Baqarah: 50)

ب) "وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ **الْبَحْرَ**" (الأعراف: 138)

al-ba_h_r in number 2-b is rendered as:

T1: 8. We took the children of Israel (with safety) across **the sea**…

(Al-A'raf: 138)

T2: 8. And We brought the children of Israel (with safety) across **the sea** …

(Al-A'raf: 138)

T3: 8. and We moved the Children of Israel from one side of **the sea** …

(Al-A'raf: 138)

ج) "وَاسْأَلْهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ **الْبَحْرِ**" (الأعراف: 163)

al-ba_h_r in number 2-c is rendered as:

T1: 9. Ask them concerning the town standing close by **the sea**.

(Al-A'raf:163)

T2: 9. about the town that was by **the sea**,…

(Al-A'raf:163)

T3: 9. Ask them about the village that overlooked **the sea**…

(Al-A'raf:163)

د) "وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ..." (يونس: 90)

al-ba**h**r in number 2-d is rendered as:

T1: 11. We took the children of Israel across **the sea**…

(Yunus: 90)

T2: 11. And We took the children of Israel across **the sea**…

(Yunus: 90)

T3: 11. We brought the Children of Israel through **the sea**…

(Yunus:90)

هـ) "فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا" (الكهف: 61)

al-ba**h**r in number 2-e is rendered as:

T1: 17. …which took its course through **the sea**…

(Al-Kahf: 61)

T2: 17. …, and took its way through **the sea**…

(Al-Kahf: 61)

T3: 17. …, which made its way burrowing into **the sea**…

(Al-Kahf: 61)

و) "فَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي الْبَحْرِ يَبَسًا..." (طه:77)

al-ba**h**r in number 2-f is rendered as:

T1: 21. …and strike a dry path for them through **the sea**…

(Taha: 77)

T2: 21. …and strike a dry path for them in **the sea**…

(Taha: 77)

T3: 21. …and strike for them a dry path in **the sea**…

(Taha: 77)

ز) "…،وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا" (الكهف:63)

al-ba**h**r in number 2-g is rendered as:

T1: 18. …: It took its course through **the sea**…

(Al-Kahf: 63)

T2: 18. … It took its course into **the sea**…

(Al-Kahf: 63)

T3: 18. …it made its way into **the sea** in a marvelous fashion.

(Al-Kahf: 63)

ح) "فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنِ اضْرِب بِّعَصَاكَ **الْبَحْرَ**" (الشعراء: 63)

al-ba<u>h</u>r in number 2-h is rendered as:

T1: 23. …"Strike **the sea** with your rod."…

(Al-Shu'ara':63)

T2: 23. …"Strike **the sea** with your stick."…

(Al-Shu'ara':63)

T3: 23. …"'Strike **the sea** with your staff,"…

(Al-Shu'ara':63)

ط) "وَاتْرُكِ **الْبَحْرَ** رَهْوًا إِنَّهُمْ جُندٌ مُّغْرَقُونَ" (الدخان: 24)

al-ba<u>h</u>r in number 2-i is rendered as:

T1: 29. "And leave **the sea** as a furrow…

(Al-Dukhan: 24)

T2: 29. "And leave **the sea** as it is…

(Al-Dukhan: 24)

T3: 29. "Then leave **the sea** calm…

(Al-Dukhan: 24)

Considering meaning of the term ***al-ba<u>h</u>r*** in the verses above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **the sea** as it refers to one specific identity. It is used referentially as it refers to one specific sea viz. the Red Sea's parting in Exodus., (for more details, see Al-alusi: 86). Therefore, the three renditions are correct.

3– أ) "… وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي **الْبَحْرِ** بِمَا يَنفَعُ النَّاسَ…" (البقرة: 164)

al-ba<u>h</u>r in number 3-a is rendered as:

T1: 3…in the sailing of the ships through **the ocean**…

(Al-Baqarah: 164)

T2: 3… and the ships which sail through **the sea**…

(Al-Baqarah: 164)

T3: 3… in the ships that sail upon **the sea**…

(Al-Baqarah: 164)

ب) "وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ..." (لقمان: 27)

al-baḥr in number 3-b is rendered as:

T1: 26. And if all the trees on earth were pens and **the ocean**…

(Luqman: 27)

T2: 26. And if all the trees on the earth were pens and **the sea**...

(Luqman: 27)

T3: 26. If all the trees in the earth were pens and **the sea**…

(Luqman: 27)

ج) "أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللهِ..." (لقمان:31)

al-bahr in number 3-c is rendered as:

T1: 31. See you not that the ships sail through **the ocean…**

(Luqman: 31)

T2: 31. See you not that the ships sail through **the sea**…

(Luqman: 31)

T3: 31. Do you not see how the ships run upon **the sea**,

(Luqman: 31)

د) "وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ" (الشورى:32)

al-bahr in number 3-d is rendered as:

T1: 28. …smooth running through **the ocean**…

(Al-Shura: 32)

T2: 28. And among His signs are the ships, in **the sea**...

(Al-Shura: 32)

T3: 28. And among His signs are the ships that run on **the sea**...

(Al-Shura: 32)

هـ) "**وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ**" (الطور:6)

al-baḥr in number 3-e is rendered as:

T1: 31. And by **the Ocean** filled with Swell-

(Al- Tur: 6)

T2: 31. And by **the sea** kept filled…

(Al- Tur: 6)

T3: 31. And **the sea** that is full…

(Al- Tur: 6)

Considering meaning of the term **al-ba*hr*** in the verses above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **the sea.** T2 and T3 render the noun correctly, whereas T1 overtranslates it by using the term ocean. Despite the fact that the definite article is used, the noun is generic more than referential and it is rendered correctly by all.

٤– "أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ **الْبَحْرِ** وَطَعَامُهُ... " (المائدة:96)

al-ba*hr* in number 4 is rendered as:

T1: 4. Lawful to you is the pursuit of **water-game**…

(Al-Ma'idah: 96)

T2: 4. Lawful to you is (the pursuit of) **water-game**…

(Al-Ma'idah: 96)

T3: 4. … Made lawful to you is the fished of **the sea**…

(Al-Ma'idah: 96)

Considering meaning of the term **al-ba*hr*** in the verse above, it can be seen that it is the counterpart of the English term **the sea**. It goes without question that the noun is employed generically more than referentially. T1 and T2 opt for the term **water-game** which is an undertranslation of the term because the image of the term **ba*hr*** is lost. In addition, the definite article is mistakenly dropped by both translations; T3, per contra, conveys the term correctly.

٥– "وَعِندَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَ**الْبَحْرِ** " (الأنعام :59)

al-ba*hr* in number 5 is rendered as:

T1: 5.…He knows whatever there is on the earth and in **the sea**…

(Al-An'am: 59)

T2: 5.…He knows whatever there is in (or on) the earth and in **the sea**…

(Al-An'am: 59)

T3: 5.… He knows that which is in the land and **sea**…

(Al-An'am: 59)

Clearly the term **al-bahr** in the verse above equals the English term **the sea** as the opposite of land and it is employed generically as it

includes all seas. T1, T2 and T3 render the noun correctly. From definiteness perspective the noun is rendered correctly by T1 and T2 whereas T3 erroneously drops the definite article.

6– أ) "قُلْ مَن يُنَجِّيكُم مِّن ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً " (الأنعام:63)

al-bahr in number 6-a is rendered as:

T1: 6. Say:"Who is that delivers you from the dark recesses of land and **sea**…"

(Al-An'am: 63)

T2: 6…"Who rescues you from the darkness of the land and **the sea** …"

(Al-An'am: 63)

T3: 6. … Say: 'Who saves you from the darkness of the land and **sea** …"

(Al-An'am: 63)

ب) "وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ" (الأنعام :97)

al-bahr in number 6-b is rendered as:

T1: 7. through the dark spaces of land and **sea**…

(Al-An'am: 97)

T2: 7…., through the darkness spaces of the land and **the sea**…

(Al-An'am:97)

T3: 7…., in the darkness of land and **sea**…

(Al-An'am:97)

ج) "وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَن تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ…" (الإسراء: 67)

al-bahr in number 6-c is rendered as:

T1: 15. When distress seizes you at **sea**…

(Al-Isra': 67)

T2: 15. And when harm touches you upon **the sea**…

(Al-Isra': 67)

T3: 15. When misfortune befalls you at **sea**…

(Al-Isra': 67)

Obviously the term *al-bahr* in the verses above is an equivalent of the English term **the sea** as the opposite of land and is used generically.

T1, T2 and T3 render the noun correctly. Fortunately, the noun is rendered correctly by T2 but it is mistranslated by T1and T3 as they drop the definite article.

7– أ) "هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۖ ..." (يونس: 22)

al-bahr in number7-a is rendered as:

T1: 10. He it is Who enables you to traverse through land and **sea**…

(Yunus: 22)

T2: 10. He it is Who enables you to traverse through land and **sea**…

(Yunus: 22)

T3: 10. It is He who conveys you by land and **sea**…

(Yunus: 22)

ب) "وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ" (الإسراء: 70)

al-bahr in number 7-b is rendered as:

T1: 16. …provided them with transport on land and **sea**…

(Al-Isra':70)

T2: 16. ….and We have carried them on land and **sea**…

(Al-Isra':70)

T3: 16. …, and carried them on both land and **sea**…

(Al-Isra':70)

ج) "ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ" (الروم:41)

al-bahr in number 7-c is rendered as:

T1: 25. Mischief has appeared on land and **sea**…

(Al-Room: 41)

T2: 25. Evil has appeared on land and **sea**…

(Al-Room: 41)

T3: 25. Corruption has appeared on land and **sea**…

(Al-Room: 41)

Clearly the term ***al-bahr*** in the verses above is an equivalent of the English term **the sea** as the opposite of land and it is employed generically more than referentially. T1, T2 and T3 render the noun correctly but unfortunately they drop the definite article.

8 – أ) " وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي **الْبَحْرِ** بِأَمْرِهِ ۖ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْهَارَ" (إبراهيم:32)

al-bahr in number 8-a is rendered as:

T1: 12. …it is He Who has made the ships subject to you, that they may
sail through **the sea** by His Command;…

(Ibrahim: 32)

T2: 12. He has made the ships to be of service to you, that they may
sail through **the sea** by His Command…

(Ibrahim: 32)

T3: 12. He has subjected to you ships which, by His command, run upon
the sea...

(Ibrahim: 32)

ب) "وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ **الْبَحْرَ** لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا… " (النحل:14)

al-bahr in number 8-b is rendered as:

T1: 13. …it is He Who has made **the sea** subject…

(Al-Nahl: 14)

T2: 13. …And He it is Who has subjected **the sea** (to you)…

(Al-Nahl: 14)

T3: 13. …It is He who has subjected **the sea** to you…

(Al-Nahl: 14)

ج) "أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي **الْبَحْرِ** بِأَمْرِهِ" (الحج: 65)

Al-bahr in number 8-c is rendered as:

T1: 22. …and the ships that sail through **the sea**…

(Ai-Hajj: 65)

T2: 22. …and the ships that sail through **the sea**…

(Ai-Hajj: 65)

T3: 22. … and the ships which run upon **the sea**…

(Ai-Hajj: 65)

Obviously the term *__al-bahr__* in the verses above is an equivalent of
the English term **the sea** as the opposite of land and is used generically.
Fortunately, the noun is rendered correctly.

9– "رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِي يُزْجِي لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِي **الْبَحْرِ** لِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ..." (الإسراء:66)

al-ba<u>h</u>r in number 9 is rendered as:

T1: 14. Your Lord is He that makes the ship go smoothly for you through **the sea**…

(Al-Isra':66)

T2: 14. Your Lord is He Who drives the ship go smoothly for you through **the sea**…

(Al-Isra':66)

T3: 14. It is your Lord who drives your ships at **sea**…

(Al-Isra':66)

Noticeably the term in ***al-bahr*** the verse above is an equivalent of the English term **the sea** as the opposite of land and it is used generically. T1, T2 and T3 render the noun correctly. Luckily, the noun is conveyed generically by T1and T2 but it is mistakenly used by T3as it resorts to the zero article.

10– "أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي **الْبَحْرِ**..." (الكهف: 79)

al-ba<u>h</u>r in number 10 is rendered as:

T1: 19. As for the boat, it belonged to certain men in dire want: they plied on **the water**…

(Al-Kahf: 79)

T2: 19. As for the ship, it belonged to poor people working in **the sea**…

(Al-Kahf: 79)

T3: 19. As for the ship, it belonged to poor people working in **the sea**…

(Al-Kahf: 79)

Considering meaning of the term ***al-bahr*** in the verse above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **the sea**, besides it is used referentially as it refers to one specific sea. T1 opts for the term ***water*** instead of ***sea*** which may be considered as an undertranslation of the term for its commonness. T2 and T3 convey the term correctly. Fortunately, the noun is used referentially in all renditions.

11– "قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ **الْبَحْرُ** مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ **الْبَحْرُ** قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي" (الكهف:109)

al-bahr in number 11 is rendered as:

T1: 20. Say: If **the ocean** were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord, sooner **the ocean** be exhausted…

(Al-Kahf: 109)

T2: 20. …" If **the sea** were ink for (writing) the Words of my Lord, surely, **the sea** would be exhausted…

(Al-Kahf: 109)

T3: 20. Say: 'If **the sea** were ink for the Words of my Lord, **the sea** would surely be spent before the Words of my Lord are spent…

(Al-Kahf: 109)

Clearly the term ***al-bahr*** in the verse above is used twice. The first one matches the English term **the sea** and it is used generically, while the second one it is an equivalent of the English term **the sea** and is used referentially as it is previously mentioned in the discourse - anaphoric *the* see Frank (1972:120). The noun is rendered correctly by all except in T1which opts for ocean instead of sea.

12– "أَمَّن يَهْدِيكُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَ**الْبَحْرِ**" (النمل:63)

al-bahr in number 12 is rendered as:

T1: 24. …through the depths of darkness on land and **sea**,…

(An-Naml: 63)

T2: 24. …in the darkness of the land and **the sea**,…

(An-Naml: 63)

T3: 24. … in the darkness of the land and **sea**,…

(An-Naml: 63)

Obviously the term ***al-bahr*** in the verse above is an equivalent of the English term **the sea** as the opposite of land and it is employed generically. T1, T2 and T3 render the noun correctly but unfortunately T1 and T3 resort to the zero article instead of the definite article to attain generic with a singular noun. Thus, only T2 achieves the correct rendition.

13-"اﷲُ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ **الْبَحْرَ** لِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلْكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرِهِ " (الجاثية:12)

al-ba<u>h</u>r in number 13 is rendered as:

T1: 30. It is Allah Who has subjected **sea** to you…

(Al-Jathiyah: 12)

T2: 30. Allah it is He Who has subjected to you **the sea**…

(Al-Jathiyah: 12)

T3: 30. It is Allah who has subjected to you **the sea**…

(Al-Jathiyah: 12)

Considering meaning of the term **al-bahr** in the verse above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **the sea.** Despite the fact that the definite article is used, the noun is generic more than referential. T2 and T3 render the noun correctly but unfortunately T1 resorts to the zero article instead of the definite article to attain generic with a singular noun.

14- "وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنْشَآتُ فِي **الْبَحْرِ** كَالْأَعْلَامِ" (الرحمن :24)

al-ba<u>h</u>r in number 14 is rendered as:

T1: 32. …the Ships sailing smoothly through **the seas**…

(Al-Rahman:24)

T2: 32. …the ships going and coming in **the seas**…

(Al-Rahman:24)

T3: 32. … Also, His are the ships that run, raised up like mountains upon **the sea**. …

(Al-Rahman:24)

Definitely, the term *al-ba<u>h</u>r* in the verse above is an equivalent of the English term **the sea** as the opposite of land and is used generically. T1, T2 and T3 render the noun correctly. Unfortunately, T1 and T2 fall victim of using the definite article before a plural noun.

15- أ) "وَمَا يَسْتَوِي **الْبَحْرَانِ** هَٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ شَرَابُهُ " (فاطر:12)

al-ba<u>h</u>r in number 15-a is rendered as:

T1: 33. Nor are **the two bodies of flowing water** alike…

(Fatir: 12)

T2: 33. And **the two seas** (kinds of water) are not alike…

(Fatir: 12)

T3: 33. He has let forth **the two seas**…

(Fatir: 12)

ب) "وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ **الْبَحْرَيْنِ** حَاجِزًا أَإِلَٰهٌ مَّعَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ" (النمل:61)

al-bahrain in number 15-b is rendered as:

T1: 37. …and made a separating bar between **the two bodies of flowing water**…

(Al-Naml: 61)

T2: 37. …and has set a barrier between **the two seas** …

(Al-Naml: 61)

T3: 37. …, and placed a barrier between **the two seas**…

(Al-Naml: 61)

Considering meaning of the term **al-bahraan** in the verses above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **the two seas.** Despite the fact that the definite article is used, the noun is generic more than referential as it refers to any two seas. T2 and T3 render the noun correctly but unfortunately T1 undertranslates the term by using *body of flowing water*.

16– "وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّىٰ أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ **الْبَحْرَيْنِ** " (الكهف:60)

al-bahrain in number 16 is rendered as:

T1: 34. … until I reach the junction of **the two seas**…

(Al-Kahf: 60)

T2: 34. … until I reach the junction of **the two seas**…

(Al-Kahf: 60)

T3: 34. …until I reach the point where **the two seas**…

(Al-Kahf: 60)

Clearly, the meaning of the term *al-bahrain* in the verse above is the English term **the two seas** and is used referentially as the addressor is referring to an identified place known to the addressee, (for more details, see Al-Alusi 1978:296). Therefore, the three renditions are correct. Luckily, the noun is rendered correctly by all.

17- "مَرَجَ **الْبَحْرَيْنِ** يَلْتَقِيَانِ" (الرحمن:19)

al-bahrain in number 17 is rendered as:

T1: 35. He has let free **the two bodies of flowing water**…

(Al-Rahman: 19)

T2: 35. He has let free **the two bodies of flowing water**…

(Al-Rahman: 19)

T3: 35. He has let forth **the two seas**, they meet together…

(Al-Rahman: 19)

Considering meaning of the term *al-bahrain*, the dual form of *bahr* in Arabic, in the verse above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **two seas**, besides it is used generically as it refers any two seas. T1 and T2 undertranslate the term, whereas T3 renders it correctly. Sadly, the three translations fall victim of mistranslating the noun by utilizing the definite article before a plural (dual in Arabic) noun instead of the zero article.

18- "وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ **الْبَحْرَيْنِ** هَٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ " (الفرقان:53)

al-bahrain in number 18 is rendered as:

T1: 36. It is He Who let free **the two bodies of flowing water**...

(Al-Furqan: 53)

T2: 36. And it is He Who let free **the two seas** (kinds of water) …

(Al-Furqan: 53)

T3: 36. It was He who let forth **the two seas**…

(Al-Furqan: 53)

Considering meaning of the term *al-bahrain*, the dual form of *bahr* in Arabic, in the verse above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **two seas**, besides it is used generically as it refers any two seas. T1 undertranslates the term, whereas T2 and T3 render it correctly. Sadly, the three translations fall victim of mistranslating the noun by utilizing the definite article before a plural noun instead of the zero article.

19– "وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ" (التكوير: 6)

al-behaar in number 19 is rendered as:

T1: 38. When **the oceans** boil over with a swell;

(Al-Takweer: 6)

T2: 38. When **the seas** shall become as blazing Fire;

(Al-Takweer: 6)

T3: 38. When **the seas** are set boiling;

(Al-Takweer: 6)

Considering meaning of the term *al-behaar*, the plural form of *bahr* in Arabic, in the verse above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **seas**, besides it is used generically as it refers to seas in general. T1 undertranslates the term, whereas T2 and T3 render it correctly. Sadly, the three translations fall victim of mistranslating the noun by utilizing the definite article before a plural noun instead of the zero article.

20– "وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ" (الانفطار: 3)

al-behaar in number 20 is rendered as:

T1: 39. When **the Oceans** are suffered to burst forth;

(Al-Infitar: 6)

T2: 39. When **the seas** are burst forth (got dried up);

(Al-Infitar: 6)

T3: 39. When **the oceans** are gushed forth,

(Al-Infitar: 6)

Considering meaning of the term *al-behaar*, the plural form of *bahr* in Arabic, in the verse above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **seas**, besides it is used generically as it refers to seas in general. T1 and T3overtranslatethe term by using the term ocean instead of sea, whereas T2 renders it correctly. Sadly, the three translations fall victim of mistranslating the noun by utilizing the definite article before a plural noun instead of the zero article.

21– " يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ **أَبْحُرٍ** مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللهِ" (لقمان: 27)

abḥur in number 21 is rendered as:
T1: 40. … with seven **oceans** behind it…

(Luqman: 27)

T2: 40. …With seven **seas** behind it…

(Luqman: 27)

T3: 40. …with seven more **seas** to replenish it (with ink),

(Luqman: 27)

Considering meaning of the term ***abḥur***, another plural form of ***bahr*** in Arabic, in the verse above, it can be seen that it is an equivalent of the English term **seas**, besides it is used generically as it refers to seas in general. T1 and T3overtranslatethe term by using the term ocean instead of sea, whereas T2 renders it correctly. Sadly, the three translations fall victim of mistranslating the noun by utilizing the definite article before a plural noun instead of the zero article.

Surveying the renditions above, we can see that:
- T1 has gone for the term "Sea" 23 times with the ratio of 56%.
- T2 has gone for the term "Sea" 39 times with the ratio of 95%.
- T3 has gone for the term "Sea" 40 times with the ratio of 97.6%.

Concerning utilizing the definite article, we observe that:
Looking at the term ***bahr*** in the verses above with an eye to its contextual meaning, it can be observed that the line of meaning doesn't have any change in the source language which entails a parallel term in the target language; say **sea**. Therefore, T1 has gone far from meaning in dealing with the term. On the contrary, T2 & T3 have made use of the situation in keeping up with the same rendition.

Observing the timeline of the three translations above: 1964, 1993, and 2009, a truth comes out to demonstrate that translation is a progressing science which draws on previous experience to achieve "optimal" translation when full measures are given. The term ***bahr*** has its own position in the Quranic texts which generate along with its

rhythmic power a unique meaning in which form and content become intertwined and subsequently inseparable.

4. Conclusion

This paper has revealed a significant point to be considered in the translating process in general and when we translate long literary works through which terms are likely to appear over and over again. It showed that deviation from meaning i.e., using more than one rendition for the same term has narrowed down by the time as a result of translation progression on both theory and practice. In other words, deviation is likely to be a human related concern rather than a context-related one. Undoubtedly, translators are supposed to maintain the original message of the text even if they feel that a repeated term may exert some redundancy in the target language unlike authors who are "free" in term shifting as translators are not text initiators.

This paper provides even further evidence of the significance of translation consistency. In our case, in the presence of too many translations of the HQ, we feel a real need for more efforts to upgrade translation.

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Transliteration of Arabic Words and Names

The following table shows the system which has been followed in transliterating the letters of the Arabic alphabet:

أ	Alif = a (long vowel) = aa	ط	Taa' = t
ب	Baa' = b	ظ	Zaa' = dh
ت	Taa' = t	ع	Ayn = α
ث	Thaa' = th	غ	Ghayn = ∞
ج	Jiim = j	ف	Faa' = f
ح	Haa' = h	ق	Qaaf = q
خ	Khaa' = kh	ك	Kaaf = k
د	Daal = d	ل	Laam = l
ذ	Dhaal = th	م	Miim = m
ر	Raa' = r	ن	Nuun = n
ز	Zaay = z	هـ	Haa' = h
س	Siin = s	و	Waaw = (w consonant) = uu (long vowel)
ش	Shiin = sh	ي	Yaa' = y (consonant) = ii (long vowel)
ص	Saad = s	ء	Hamzah = '(apostrophe)
ض	Dhad = dh		

Short vowels:
ﹷ--- (fathah) = a
ﹹ---(dammah) = o
ﹻ--- (kasrah) = e

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