

APPROPRIATE WAYS OF TRANSLATING PROPHETS' NAMES AS RELIGIOUS TERMS

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Abstract. *This thesis investigates the translation of prophets' names from Arabic into English and underlines the significance of this topic in religious translation studies. The research focuses on the linguistic, cultural, and religious dimensions of translating prophets' names and reviews the main translation approaches, such as transliteration, phonetic modification, and the application of Biblical equivalents. In addition, the study compares the original Qur'anic versions of prophets' names with their English Biblical forms. The findings suggest that preserving the original Arabic-Qur'anic names is essential for protecting the religious meaning, cultural heritage, and authenticity of Islamic texts.*

Keywords: *religious translation, prophets' names, transliteration, Qur'anic forms, Biblical equivalents, translation methods, cultural and religious authenticity.*

Introduction. Religious translation is one of the most sensitive and challenging fields of translation studies because religious words and expressions often carry deep spiritual and cultural meanings. Among these terms, the names of prophets have a special significance in Islam. In many English translations of the Qur'an and Islamic texts, prophets' names are often replaced with their Biblical equivalents. For example, Isa is translated as Jesus, Musa as Moses, and Ibrahim as Abraham. Although this approach may be easier for English-speaking readers to recognize, it can also create differences in pronunciation, meaning, and religious perception.

This thesis aims to analyze the translation of prophets' names into English and identify which translation strategy best preserves the original meaning and identity of the Qur'anic text.

Main Part. Translation Strategies of Prophets' Names

Several translation methods are commonly used when translating prophets' names into English.

The first and most common method is **transliteration**, where the original Arabic form is preserved as closely as possible. Examples include Muhammad, Isa, Musa, and Yusuf. This method helps maintain the original sound and religious identity of the names.

Another method is **phonetic adaptation**, in which the spelling or pronunciation is adjusted to fit English language rules. For example, Muhammad may appear as Mohammed.

The third strategy involves the use of Biblical equivalents, where the original Qur'anic names are replaced with the forms commonly used in the Bible and in English religious tradition. Examples include:

Isa → Jesus
 Musa → Moses
 Ibrahim → Abraham
 Yahya → John
 Yusuf → Joseph
 Nuh → Noah
 Sulayman → Solomon
 Ismail → Ishmael
 Ishaq → Isaac
 Yaqub → Jacob
 Harun → Aaron
 Ayyub → Job
 Dawud → David
 Yunus → Jonah
 Idris → Enoch
 Ilyas → Elijah
 Al-Yasa → Elisha
 Zakariya → Zechariah

This strategy is widely used in English translations because these Biblical forms are more familiar to many readers. However, replacing Qur'anic names with Biblical equivalents may sometimes weaken the original Islamic and cultural identity of the text and create differences in pronunciation, interpretation, and religious understanding. While this method may make the text more familiar to Western readers, it may also distance the translation from its Islamic context.

Linguistic and Cultural Aspects

Prophets' names are not simply personal names; they are deeply connected with religion, history, and culture. The Arabic forms used in the Qur'an reflect Islamic tradition and carry specific phonetic and spiritual meanings. When these names are replaced by Biblical versions, some of their original cultural and religious identity may be lost.

In addition, different forms of the same name can influence how readers understand the text. A reader may associate the name Jesus more strongly with Christian tradition, while the name Isa clearly reflects the Islamic context of the Qur'an.

Importance of Preserving Qur'anic Forms. Preserving the original Arabic-Qur'anic forms of prophets' names is important for several reasons. First, it helps maintain the authenticity of the sacred text. Second, it protects the cultural and religious identity of Islamic terminology. Third, it allows readers to experience the text more closely to its original form. For these reasons, many scholars and translators believe that transliteration is one of the most appropriate methods for translating prophets' names into English.

Conclusion. The translation of prophets' names is not only a linguistic matter but also a cultural and religious responsibility. Different translation strategies can shape readers' understanding of religious texts in different ways. This study concludes that preserving the original Arabic-Qur'anic forms of prophets' names through transliteration is the most effective way to maintain the authenticity, meaning, and spiritual value of Islamic texts in English translation.

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