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Research Article:

Malay-English Translation Competencies Among Future Global *Da'ies*

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ABSTRACT

Demands for a greater number of preachers or *Da'ies* who are capable in delivering the Islamic teachings clearly and confidently are anticipated to increase. Besides knowledge on Islam and its teachings that they possess, these *Da'ies* are expected to have a good command of English language to convey the Islamic teachings to a wider global audience. Malaysia has many capable *Da'ies* who can disseminate Islam in the Malay language but many lack the ability to communicate well in English. Ignoring this problem will produce incompetent *Da'ies* who may miss critical issues, resulting in lost knowledge, and inadept understanding of Islam. Thus, it is vital for these *Da'ies* to have the ability to translate Islamic terms, concepts and worldview correctly, to ensure better coverage of *da'wah*. The objective of this paper is to investigate students' English proficiency by looking at their ability to translate. This paper examines the translation competence of 71 students from various faculties from a Malaysian Islamic-based public university. A test was used as the research instrument which was later examined via document analysis approach. Students were asked to translate basic Islamic religious terms and the translated work were marked based on a set of acceptable answers determined by the researchers. Findings indicate that their translation competencies are influenced by three elements: language, textual/subject and cultural competences. However, the participants have poor translation qualities indicating lack of translation abilities. Future recommendations regarding translation competencies, and Islamic religious terms translation issues are discussed.

Keywords: Translation competence, *Da'ies*, language competence, subject competence, cultural competence

INTRODUCTION

As a preacher of Islam, one is expected to possess vast knowledge of the religion and its teachings as well as the ability to deliver them effectively. With the growing interest in the religion, the demands for a greater number of preachers or *Da'ies* who are capable in delivering the Islamic teachings clearly are anticipated to increase. Thus, the ability to communicate and disseminate knowledge in a language or languages that can be understood by the recipients is crucial to ensure clarity and comprehension. Fortunately, Malaysia has many capable *Da'ies* who are not only knowledgeable in their subject matter but can also deliver the messages of Islam effectively in Malay. However, the message of Islam is not only for Malay Muslims. It is for all. Thus, being at least bilingual (proficient in Malay and English) is paramount. Besides possessing knowledge in Islam and its teachings, *Da'ies* are expected to have a good command of English language and be eloquent to reach to a wider global audience. This includes the ability to translate Islamic terms, concepts and worldview correctly, in order to ensure accurate dissemination of knowledge or *da'wah*. Ignoring such important language skills and abilities will produce *Da'ies* who may have knowledge of Islam but not able to deliver the teachings accurately, thus resulting in loss of knowledge and understanding of Islam.

Competence is a universal term widely used in many disciplines and contexts. Rychen (2003) defines competence as "the ability to successfully meet complex demands in a particular context through the mobilisation of knowledge, cognitive skills but also practical skills, as well as social and behaviour components; such as attitudes, emotions, and values and motivations" (p. 3). In the field of translation, competence is crucial as it demands interdisciplinary work and multi-faceted skills to ensure that the desired quality is met. According to Esfandiari et al. (2015), on the practice of translation, translation competence is process and cognitive-oriented. Wilss (1982) describes translation competence as requiring "an interlingual super competence", which is based on the respective inclusive source language and target language knowledge, together with the text-pragmatic dimension, as well as the ability of assimilating the two competencies on an upper level. The five parameters that constitute translation competence are: language competence, textual competence, subject competence, cultural competence and transfer competence (Neubert, 2000). Asiri and Metwally (2020) studied the pedagogical implications of the linguistic and cultural competence on the quality of translation towards producing self-directed, autonomous and competent translators. Their research found that peer review could be one of the significant techniques that can boost linguistic and cultural competence and consequently translation competence. This finding would prove beneficial in the training of translators, and also other professionals who need to perform such operations in their jobs, like the *Da'ies*.

In doing translation, it is vital to understand ideas from other cultures, thus making cultural considerations a prime concern in the process of translating contents. It is also crucial to grasp that culture and language are interrelated. Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) put forward the awareness of a cultural turn in Translation Studies that prove to expand the

field from a purely Linguistics domain to a richer and more diverse discipline. Within the same decade, Cultural Studies became more influential and co-existed with Translation Studies, presenting their interdisciplinary connections. As observed by Bassnett and Lefevere (1998), "the study of translation, like the study of culture, needs a plurality of voices. And similarly, the study of culture always involves an examination of the processes of encoding and decoding that comprise translation" (p. 138–139). In training translators, cultural knowledge is traditionally central; undoubtedly, cross-cultural competence and inter-cultural competence, are gaining important grounds alongside the superdiversity in terms of increased linguistic, ethnic and cultural hybridity of our present society (Koskinen, 2000; 2015). Relatively, these are the new variables, a *Da'ie*, as a translator in training need to manage in performing their roles and functions in the society. These variables are also proof that it is vital for a *Da'ie* to have translations skills, as English is the lingua franca which makes it an important medium to spread Islam. It is the most spoken and adopted language in the world (Statista Research Department, 2020). Furthermore, in Islam, translation is inevitable as can be seen through the translated versions of the holy book, i.e., the Quranic Tafsir.

The recent trends in Translation Studies emphasise a much broader way of translation which not only include the traditional variables such as meaning and equivalence, but also other concepts pertinent to the production of human and social interaction, like text genre (Ressurrecció et al., 2008). In performing the tasks of a religious speaker like the *Da'ie*, his or her translation work (verbal or written) needs to be knowledge and genre specific. Knowledge from the Holy Book (The Quran and Hadith) needs to be accurately conveyed in the target language (in this case, English). Taking into account the genre of the text (The Quran and Hadith), the *Da'ie* must be able to transfer the message from the genre-specific texts, into a meaningful message for his /her audience who may come from diverse cultural backgrounds.

TRANSLATION AND RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

Translation allows transfer or exchange of ideas and thoughts where in a perfect condition the translation process should transfer all the intended meaning of the source language to the target language (Abdellah, 2002; Daoud Khammyseh, 2015). The fact that "[t]he practice of translating is long established, but the discipline of translation studies is relatively new" (Munday, 2016, p. 7), indicates that there are more to the translation field which can be explored. This is even more so since many translation studies are moving from focusing on just the linguistics aspects to focusing on cultural aspects that affect translations and its process.

With regard to the cultural aspects, as mentioned before, the background of our subjects that might affect the translation process are Malaysian Malay Muslims. And the linguistics aspects include the translation from Malay (perhaps some with heavy influence of Arabic) language(s) into the English language. English is known as the main tool of communication

in the globalised world, and the scope or context of when English is being used is overtly diverse. Prominent dimensions where English is of paramount value includes the economy and business field, technology and science. It is also one of the languages widely used in the religious discourse.

Translation and ESP

Due to the diverse nature of English language usage and the myriad discourses it is being used in, English is taught in special language classes usually called the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. This is due to the need to properly learn the jargons and technical terms in English as used in that particular discourse and for that particular group. So, ESP course like English for Science and Technology, English for Business Communication, and English for Engineering courses are offered in most universities throughout the world. The situation is also true in Malaysia. ESP is cited as a helpful course as it provides learners with the fundamental vocabulary to function in their field of work (Talif & Noor, 2009).

One of the ESP techniques is focusing on teaching jargons of a specific field, and indeed, with the mushrooming of so many other fields, the first step would be identifying those fundamental jargons and technical terms in new or side-lined fields. One particular field that is of interest of this present paper is the field of *da'wah* and the people spreading the *da'wah*, i.e., *Da'ie*. However, the role and the gravity of translation for *da'wah* courses differ from courses such as Science and Technology, English for Business Communication, and English for Engineering. For other courses, translation may only be a learning method for English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language learners. The effectiveness is observed from the learners' understanding of the content and function of the language. On the other hand, for *da'wah* course, translation carries a more important role. It goes beyond the learner's understanding. The weight of usage lies in the understanding of the learners' correspondents (in this case those who are interested in learning Islam) and the effectiveness is observed from the compliance in the intended contexts.

Translation and *Da'wah*

English is one of the commonly used language in the current *da'wah* activity and consequently possessing the right amount of basic jargons related to the teaching and learning of Islam is of the utmost importance to a *Da'ie* (Hazlina, Myra Aidrin, & Hazleena, 2010). Furthermore, it is even more crucial to have the basic vocabulary when engaging *da'wah* with new Muslim converts whose first language is different than them. The ability to translate from source language to target language is said as "a key element in disseminating the divine message" and mainly used to teach new converts, especially those whose first language is English, about the fundamentals in religion (Elewa, 2014, p. 25). Translation is cited as "a powerful instrument for missionary purposes" (Elewa, 2014, p. 25). Thus, the mastery of English language, which is known as the main communicative language on the global platform, is of utmost importance, but it comes with a number of challenges. For instance, *Da'ies* may face certain challenges with Islamic

expressions since many words are considered as specialised terms. In their *da'wah*, they need to familiarise themselves and use "distinctively theological words" (Elewa, 2014, p. 26), such as *alms-giving*, *pilgrimage* and *statement of faith*.

Many studies have examined the issues, problems and techniques to overcome the challenges when it comes to translating religious Islamic terms into the English language. Attempts to translate Islamic expressions especially by novice translators into the English language are said to be challenging due to the fact that those expressions lack or have almost no equivalence in English (Daoud Khammyseh, 2015). Additionally, differences in cultures, structures and linguistic forms of both languages are named as the problems (Abdellah, 2002; Daoud Khammyseh, 2015). In another study that focuses on the translation of Islamic terms from Indonesian language (source) to the English language (target) of an Indonesian language bulletin, the researcher found that the main cause of inaccurate translation is when the translator focuses on the words instead of the meaning intended in the source language (Suriadi, 2018). This is in line with another research that suggests the importance of content/meaning and also form/structure when translating religious texts (Butnariu, 2017). The accuracy in translation, which can also be understood as competence, especially for religious contents is crucial because inaccuracy could lead to conflict, and even worse to igniting a war (Butnariu, 2017). This is because the translated religious content is the mediation between one culture to another which consequently leads to the representation of the religious people and doctrine (Elgindy, 2013). It is even more difficult when the religious term is also affected by socio-cultural factors, especially the hardest task for translators is in finding the equivalence in target language for cultural-specific items e.g., the term *jilbab* which is a Quranic word and also an expression that is bound by Arab-culture (Fatemah Zahra, 2016).

With regard to the present study, Dweik and Abu Shakra's (2010) study might be the closest example which we can associate it with. They examined 35 Jordanian Masters students' translation of Arabic language into the English language. They used short sentences from three selected religious texts, namely the Quran, Bible and Hadith. However, unlike the current study that focuses on competence, Dweik and Abu Shakra's (2010) study focused on the translation strategies adopted by the students such as synonymy, generalisation, paraphrasing, deletion and literal translation.

Translation Competencies

Five types of competencies are said to be the most important in the making of an effective translator (Zainurrahman, 2010). The first competency is language/linguistic competence that can be briefly explained as the mastery of both source and target languages. Second, is the textual competency which is the knowledge about the text types and genres. Third, subject competence is about being proficient in the subject matter of that particular field. Fourth, which was mentioned to be one of the trickiest, is the cultural competence where translators should be familiar with the socio-cultural convention of the source and target languages. The fifth and the final competency is transfer competence which is "the ability

of transferring message from source text to target text communicatively" (Zainurrahman, 2010, p. 7), and a competency that is supported by knowledge of all the other competencies. This study focuses on three competencies namely the language, subject and cultural competencies. The authors did not include the textual competency because we focus on Islamic words and phrases, which disregards the genre and text type (textual competency). We also did not include the fifth competency because we believe that being competent in all four automatically enables a translator to acquire the transfer competency.

Unlike other texts, accurate translation of religious texts such as the Quran and religious terms used in it is of utmost importance because obviously accuracy of the message is paramount to the understanding of the Islamic religion. But most importantly, Allah the Almighty has promised to protect the Quran and those who change the intended meaning should very well know that they would be held responsible for their action (Hassan, 2016). Thus, there is a need to equip *Da'ies* who spread the words of Allah from the Quran with good translation ability and the first step to achieve that is through identifying their weaknesses in their translation competencies. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the students' English proficiency by looking at their ability to translate basic *da'wah*-related vocabulary.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

> Research question 1: Are the students from an Islamic-based public university competent in translation?
>
> Research question 2: What are the translation competencies demonstrated by the students?

In order to answer the research questions, and to assess the translation competencies of the participants, the study employed the qualitative research design through document analysis.

Participants

Through purposive sampling method, a total of 71 students were involved as participants in this study. They were first year second semester students registered in an Islamic-based public university in Malaysia. They possessed similar secondary level educational background where all of them studied at religious schools prior to joining the university. At the university, the participants were students from various faculties majoring in programmes like Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Arabic Language Communication, Fiqh and Fatwa, Law and Shariah, Food Biotechnology and Information Security and Assurance. Due to their

background, they are expected to shoulder the responsibility of being *Da'ies*, despite being professionals, e.g., doctors, lawyers etc. in the future. They can also preach and spread the knowledge of Islam to a bigger audience outside the Malay speaking world, which may include non-Malays in Malaysia or when they interact with the global citizens.

Data Collection

The research instrument used to collect data from the participants is a document consisting of a list of words and phrases written in Malay. The 29 words and phrases were those commonly found and used in the subjects of their programme. The list includes words and phrases in Bahasa Malaysia such as *berpuasa* (fasting), *nabi* (prophet), *Rukun Iman* (Pillars of Faith) and *menunai haji* (performing hajj). They were then asked to translate them into English within 45 minutes or so. Ample time was given since many students submitted before the time limit. The aim was to determine their translation competencies having to translate from Malay into English (from the source language to the target language).

Following this, their translated works were examined and marked based on an accepted answer scheme determined by the researchers. The answer scheme was verified by two groups of experts comprising language experts and a translation expert. The experts were faculty members from a language faculty at the university. Three of them hold a PhD degree in language and linguistics and one has a master's degree in translation studies.

Data Analysis

As mentioned earlier, this study employed the document analysis method whereby the participants' translated works were examined and marked. First, the analyses were tabulated in the forms of numbers and percentages of the correct answers provided by the participants. The aim of this descriptive analyses was to examine the participants' translation competencies manifested in the number of accurate translated words and phrases. Based on their scores, the participants were ranked into three levels as shown in Table 1. The ranking was formulated and decided based on input from four inter-raters. Initially, the inter-raters worked to formulate the ranking individually. Subsequently, these ranking were compared to one another before a unanimous decision was made for the best ranking system to categorise the levels of students' translation competencies.

Table 1. Levels of students' translation competencies

Percentage range (%)	Description
67–100	Competent
33–66	Fairly competent
0–32	Not competent

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: Are the Students from an Islamic-Based Public University Competent in Translation?

It is found that only about 15% of the students are considered competent in the translation work they have completed. The majority (74.6%) are considered fairly competent while about 10% are rated as not competent as exhibited in Table 2 and Figure 1. This highlights that the students who come from an Islamic-based public university lack exceptional translation competencies, which may affect their expected roles as outstanding *Da'ies* or preachers at the global level.

Table 2. Percentages of students according to levels of competencies ($N = 71$)

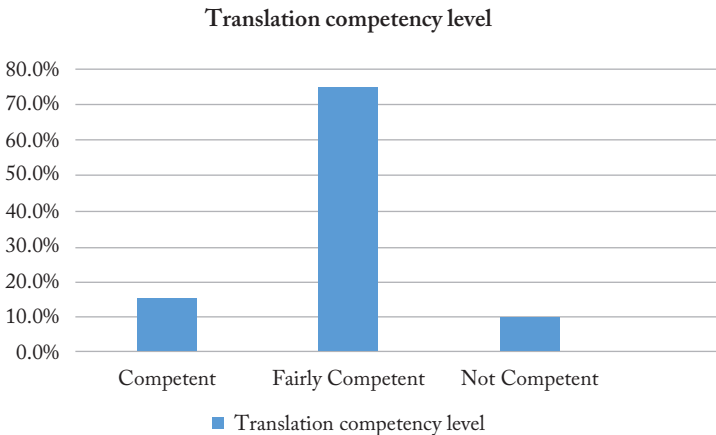| Description	Number of participants (%)
Competent	11 (15.5)
Fairly competent	53 (74.6)
Not competent	7 (9.9)

Figure 1. Students' levels of translation competencies

Research Question 2: What are the Translation Competencies Demonstrated by the Students?

This section discusses the three main competencies that build the *Da'ies'* translation competencies, namely the Language competence, Subject competence, and Cultural competence. It can be deduced from the scores that the majority of the students have different levels of Language competency. The competent students demonstrated a higher level of language competence in which their language competency is woven together

with Subject and Cultural competencies. Students were able to use language that adheres to syntactic, semantic, as well as pragmatic functions. They did not only translate the words correctly but maintained the tone and function of the source language. The fairly competent students demonstrated fair Language and Subject competencies. They were able to translate common words, as well as words that are subject-specific. The not competent students demonstrated only Language competency that is overall considered poor. They could only translate frequently used words.

Table 3 above shows the selected translated words by students who achieved the highest scores (Competent level). These students demonstrated all three sub-competencies of translation competence which is discussed in the following sections.

Table 3. Examples of words/phrases translated by the competent learners

Competent group		
Language competence	Subject competence	Cultural competence
Pray, ablution, fasting, angels, prophets, purify/clean, obligatory		
Pillars of Islam, Pillars of Iman, zakah, performing hajj		
		Khitan/circumcision, *wajib*/obligatory/must/mandatory, *haram*/forbidden
Allah is one		
Prayers/Du'a are not necessarily in Arabic		Prayers/Du'a are not necessarily in Arabic.
It is obligatory to recite the *shahadah* to embrace Islam.		It is obligatory to recite the *shahadah* to embrace Islam.

Language competence and subject competence

Language competency is shown through the ability of the students in selecting appropriate lexical choice. Words such as *pray, ablution, fasting, angels, prophets, purify/clean* and *obligatory* were correctly translated. In a way, these words may also appear in their courses hence enabling them to be subject/textual competent as well. One significant observation of subject/textual competency is with the translation of *'Allah itu Esa'* to *'Allah is One'*. Students maintained the word *Allah*, rather than changing it to *God*, as they are aware of the Islamic-related genre of the questionnaire. By looking at the list of words given to be translated, the students may also identify the regularities of the religious genre, specifically Islamic text. Thus, they demonstrated subject/textual competency when words such as *Islam*, *Iman*, *zakah* and *hajj* are maintained when translated into English. The students were aware that these words appear in English texts simultaneously show that they have language competency. Furthermore, they demonstrated knowledge on the concordant pairs whereby the words chosen preceded these vocabularies are correct, for example the word *hajj* is preceded by the word *performing*, and the words *Iman* and *Islam* are preceded by the word *pillars*.

Cultural competence

Students also demonstrated cultural competence as they seemed to know both the source (albeit in Malay or Arabic) and the target language (English). The Malay word *khatan* (*khitan* in Arabic) was translated to khitan/circumcision and the phrases *hukum wajib* (*wajib* in Arabic) and *hukum haram* (*haram* in Arabic) were translated into wajib/obligatory/must/mandatory and haram/forbidden, respectively. The cultural competency is also demonstrated from the translation of sentences as they seemed to be competent in looking for equivalent choices of words that suit the language function. In saying that, this sub-competent merges with language competent, which is being aware of the language function. Some sentences were not translated word for word. Instead, the tone and meaning were emphasised. For example, *'Doa tidak semestinya dalam Bahasa Arab'* was translated to 'It is okay if the prayer is not in Arabic'. The function and the tone of this sentence, which is to assure, is maintained. Another example is an imperative as in *'Perlu mengucapkan syahadah untuk memeluk Islam'*. Here the students were able to keep the tone of imperative when translating the sentence into 'It is a must to say shahadah to embrace Islam' and 'It is obligatory to recite the shahadah to embrace Islam'. It can be observed here that in considering readership, students are competent at both maintaining the function and selecting the correct/almost equivalent choices of words.

The translation competency demonstrated by these students are a concoction of three sub-competencies. The samples of translation given by the students are nevertheless overlapping in terms of sub-competencies and dynamic in nature, which is they did not conform to only translating word for word, but focus was given more in maintaining tone and function for the reader's understanding.

For the Fairly Competent group, it could be seen that the students grouped into this level have shown a mixed ability in the translation work examined, under two translation competencies namely the Language competence and the Subject/Textual competence as seen in Table 4. For the former, some students managed to translate the word '*wudhu*' correctly but misspelt the word as 'abolution' or 'abulation'. Another example of spelling mistake detected is 'compulsory' for the word '*wajib*'.

Another major problem, which is noticeable under Language competence, is using direct translation that is "... when the source language is mirrored, sometimes word for word, into the target language" (http://www.copypanthers.com/resources/direct-translation/). Direct translation is found to be common in the examined work, and when this happens, even though each word is translated correctly, the overall meaning is 'lost in translation'. Some examples include 'Entering Islam does not mean that you are Malays', 'Coming in Islam is not means that you coming in Melayu', 'pray not only in Arabic language', 'open fasting' and 'opening fast'. Students are also found to translate certain words inaccurately for example 'Allah is Almighty' for 'Allah is one', 'Islamic Regulation' for 'Pillars of Islam' and 'Iman Regulation' for 'Pillars of Iman'. These are subject specific terms commonly found in

the participants' field of study, yet they were not able to translate them into English, which signals that the students' Language competence is fairly low even at word level.

Table 4. Examples of words/phrases translated by the fairly competent learners

Fairly competent group		
Language competence	Cultural competence	Subject / textual competence
Abolution: They seem to know the word, but wrong spelling of 'ablution' Compulsary: Spelling		Circumcision - subject
Embrace Islam does not mean turn in Malays		Convert to Islam does not mean convert to Malay
Allah is Almighty		Should bear the witness of Allah in order to become Muslims
Entering Islam does not mean that you are Malays (direct translation)		Need to bear witness to embrace Islam
Islamic Regulation Iman Regulation		*Wudhu*
Open fasting		Fajr
Cleanliness		Perform hajj
Coming in Islam is not means that you coming in Melayu		Perform *zakat*
Pray not only in Arabic language		Hereafter
Apocalypse		Sujd
Opening fast		The Messenger

However, when the words to be translated are not subject specific but are frequently used in their area of expertise, the participants were able to translate correctly. For example, *berpuasa* (fast), *sembahyang/solat* (pray). In another instance, a few students have shown impressive vocabulary for *hari Kiamat* (Hereafter) when they translated it into apocalypse, doomsday and armageddon. A possible justification for their impressive vocabulary may be due to movies they had watched (e.g., a 1998 movie Armageddon, a 2014 movie Apocalypse and a 2008 movie Doomsday). Previous studies have shown that watching movies especially those with subtitles facilitate vocabulary development (Ashcroft et al., 2018; Bellalem et al., 2018; Sadiku, 2017).

At phrase level, some of the participants generally could provide acceptable translations. For example, "*Puasa bukan hanya di bulan Ramadhan*" (Fasting is not only in Ramadhan), "*Doa tidak semestinya dalam Bahasa Arab*" (Doa is not a must in Arabic language), "*Perlu mengucapkan syahadah untuk memeluk Islam*" (Must say the syahadah before become a Muslim), "*Masuk Islam bukan bererti masuk Melayu*" (Become a Muslim does not mean become a Malay). A possible explanation for this could be due to their overall understanding of the subject.

In short, even though the participants' language competence is quite low, some could translate phrases which did not use subject specific terms. A possible explanation for this could be due to Subject competence that they possessed. They have the knowledge of the subject matter; thus, they were able to translate the phrases. There were instances in which the participants' Subject competence could be observed in the translation. However, due to their language incompetence, the translations were marred. The participants were not able to use the accurate terms or jargons found in the area of subject matter. It is also evident that for the Fairly Competent group, the element of Cultural competence can barely be seen as the translations did not reflect students' abilities to be aware of the target readers (the readership). Though some may show understanding of the phrases, as they are subject related, words and phrases were merely translated. Using phrases such as 'Should bear the witness of Allah in order to become Muslims' is an evidence of being language competent yet lack of cultural competence as we can assume that the potential reader of such text (the *muallaf*) may not understand how one should do that. Here, students were not able to look for equivalent proposition of text, hence, creating a mismatch between the source and target language.

Table 5. Examples of words/phrases translated by the not competent learners

Not competent group		
Language competence	Subject/textual competence	Cultural competence
Pray		
Prophet		
Fast		
Clean		

Table 5 shows the selected translated words by students who achieved the lowest scores (Not Competent level). These students demonstrated lack of translation competence as those in the table are the only correct translated words. They were able to translate these words as the words are frequently used and are not subject specific. Most of the incorrect translations were due to the lack of vocabulary and they ended up writing long-winded sentences. For example, the word *sujud* (postrate) is translated into 'put your head down' and 'down to Allah'. Besides lacking in language competence, they definitely lack subject/textual competency as they were not aware that the word *sujud* itself is acceptable in English language as *sujd* or *sujood*. Same goes with *zakat* (alms/tithe), which can be translated to *zakah*, but was translated by the students to 'give money to other people', 'give money to the needed', and 'pay a debt'. Another example is the word *khatan* (circumcision), which is acceptable in English if the word is maintained as *khitan*, but was translated into 'cutting', 'vanish dirty part', and 'thing to do before turning into adult'. These answers are examples of how the students lack subject/textual competence as they could not relate the vocabulary to the genre of *da'wah* related text. As these students are poor at translating words at lexical levels, they are observed to be struggling when translating phrases and sentences. Students could not convey the source language into target language, what is more keeping the tone and function of the source language.

For example, *'Masuk Islam bukan bererti masuk Melayu'* (Converting/Reverting into Islam does not mean becoming a Malay) was translated by the students to 'Enter Islam is not mean enter in Malay', and 'Entering Islam doesn't mean entering Melayu'.

On the whole, the students who achieved the lowest scores are shown to be not competent in terms of translation. They do not have the competencies of either language (perhaps only for the most basic words), subject/textual, or cultural.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION OF STUDY

This paper examines the translation competence of 71 students, in which the uniqueness of the study lies in the students' Islamic background from various faculties and programmes of an Islamic-based public university in Malaysia. The research questions were addressed through a thorough document analysis of translation works of the participants which were verified by language and translation experts. Future studies involving a larger number of participants can be conducted to capture bigger coverage e.g., different year of studies, gender, and public versus private universities.

For these students, translation competency is deemed important as they may one day become *Da'ie* who will invite people from all walks of life to understand Islam through the English language, as English is still a lingua franca commonly used across the globe. Even though the *da'wah* is to be carried out to the local population, their ability to master the English language would be an extra merit to them as even within Malaysia and among Malays, English is still widely used. Thus, firm grasp on the subject-area terminology in English is very important. Unfortunately, this study witnesses a poor translation quality into the English language. Most learners lack translation competency that may affect the quality of *da'wah* in the future. To address this issue, we suggest that the language faculty at the university organise seasonal translation workshops. And most importantly, establish a test or system to assess students' competency level especially to those students who wish to venture into the *da'wah* field. There is also a need to teach English not just for communication purposes but for specific purposes as the main aim of ESP instruction is to equip learners to function well in their area of specialisation (Widodo, 2016; Yanti & Triastuti, 2020).

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