

TRANSLATING 'ISLAM' INTO JAPANESE — CONCERNING THE JAPANESE VERSION OF THE QUR'AN AND ITS TRANSLATION STRATEGY*

RANA HAGGAG**

I. *Introduction*

Japan is a country whose religious traditions are the furthest removed from monotheistic belief systems. Japan's oldest indigenous belief form is considered to be polytheism and animism (neither being monotheistic), which eventually mixed with Buddhism that was later imported from China and Korea. In such historical circumstances, it is supposedly difficult to obtain a thorough understanding of monotheistic philosophy and belief. To this end, we examine a Japanese translation of the Qur'an under the assumption that the cultural distance between the source and target language is accommodated according to various translation strategies.

What is the relationship between religious text, especially holy text that is at the center of faith and doctrine, and the act of translation? As any religion has its own cultural background, it will encounter different linguistic and cultural contexts from those inherent within it, when it is exported from its birthplace to other places. Herein lies the problem of the translation of religious texts. Since any holy text is written in an individual language, its translation into a foreign language may incur the risk of losing its original 'holy meaning'. Specifically, "the holy resists translation" (Long 2005: 1). From such perspective, the problem regarding the translation of religious texts occupies an important place if we seek to understand the limits of translatability.

In Islam, the Qur'an is considered to be an "inimitable" text; only the Qur'an in Arabic deserves to be named a sacred text, and any Qur'an that is translated into languages other than Arabic is merely an explanation or commentary; basically, it is not the Qur'an. As a result, there have been very few translation studies on Qur'anic text. According to Abdul-Raof, "[t]he problem of Qur'an untranslatability has always been dealt with from a theological and historical point of view" and "there is no study available today that accounts for the problem of untranslatability of the Qur'an from linguistic and applied translation studies (Abdul-Raof 2001: 1). El-Hadary critically examined the concept of "equivalence", advocated by E. Nida, between original text and target text, and discussed various questions about the "untranslatability" of the Qur'an from the viewpoint of linguistic theory (El-Hadary 2009). Thus, translation studies about the Qur'an have really only just begun. In fact, both Abdul-Raof and El Hadary deal only with the translation from Arabic to English. In this paper, I would like to go one step further in the

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** Research Fellow, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

translation studies of religious texts by discussing the problem of the Japanese translation of the Qur'an.

II. *Translation Strategy*

First, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of translation strategy. In a sense, a translator who is faced with an original text resembles a mathematician seeking a solution to a complicated equation. Like a mathematician, a translator put in such circumstances will seek to obtain a target text through various procedures systematically. A target text could be considered as a solution to a problem that arises when a text is transplanted into another language. However, this transplant cannot be performed mechanically, because a text is a complex compound in which various linguistic, cultural, social layers etc. are accumulated and entwined with each other.

It is not possible to transplant all the attributes making up the original text into the target text. As Roman Jakobson said, the task of translation does not lie in restoring all the features of the original text in the target text (Jakobson 1959). In other words, a translator must make a choice about what is to be utilized and what is to be abandoned among the many questions set up by an original text. As observed by one of the prominent scholars who systematized translation theory (Toury 2012), as long as a translation is a series of decision processes moving from question to solution, a certain strategy is required in order to set up the direction of solutions for each point. We could say that a translation strategy consists of principles and procedures adopted by a translator when he/she selects the issues to be solved and executes the task of translation in a specific way.

What is noteworthy about the concept of translation strategy is the dichotomy of "domestication" and "foreignization" proposed by Venuti (Venuti 1995). The opposition between "domestication" and "foreignization" is similar to the opposition between "literal" and "free" translation or between "formal equivalence" and "dynamic equivalence" proposed by E. Nida, but the former is different from the latter in that the latter concepts deal with the procedures of translation, while Venuti's definition takes into consideration the power problem in translation. Traditionally, the condition of "good translation" has been considered as the acquisition of the "naturalness" as if the text were originally written in the target language. However, essentially, translation is a practice that transplants a text written in a particular language into another language. Since different languages will have different ways of expression, style, and ways of thinking, an original text has many aspects that cannot be easily expressed in the target language. If a translator manages to erase such parts that are "difficult to understand" and to create a text that can be "easily understood" in the target language, it will obscure the essential "difference" and "foreignness" inherent in the original text. From such viewpoints, Venuti evaluates "foreignizing translation" which exposes the "difference" of the original text more positively than "domesticating translation" which aims at achieving "naturalness" in the target language. The former is superior to the latter not only as a translation procedure, but also a challenger to the violence of translation that could eliminate the "otherness" of the original text. Although this is a slight exaggeration, it is certain that Venuti's argument contributes to clarifying the importance of translation strategies hidden behind the myth of "naturalness" in translation, and invites us to rethink the condition of "good

translation”. Such perspective is relevant even when considering issues about the Japanese translation of the Qur’an.

III. *Japanese Translations of the Qur’an*

To date there have been nine complete translations of the Qur’an into Japanese. Among them, three are in languages other than Arabic, and the other six are directly translated from the Arabic original. Among these six editions, two are rather difficult to obtain because of the publishers. Accordingly, the following four editions are considered to be commonly available: Izutsu (井筒) 1957, Fujimoto (藤本) 1970, Mita (三田) 1983, Nakata (中田) 2014.

Among these four editions, we shall focus on Izutsu’s translation. The reason for this choice is as follows. First, this is the first complete translation from the Arabic original of the Qur’an into Japanese. Not only that, but this version, which is composed of three paperback volumes, is the most widely read because it is contained in “Iwanami Bunko”, published by “Iwanami Shoten”, which is the most prestigious paperback library in the Japanese publishing sector. Furthermore, the translator Izutsu is a renowned Islamic scholar in Japan. He actively pursued his study abroad and wrote many books and articles about Islamic philosophy in English. After returning to Japan in 1979, Izutsu applied himself to writing in Japanese and his works were broadly welcomed by a large readership. As testament to this, the collected works of Izutsu were published twice by different publishers. This is a rare occurrence for an academic scholar of his ilk. In a sense, his fame extends beyond limited academic circles. Lastly, Izutsu’s style in translation is very unique and totally different from other translations. For these reasons, Izutsu’s translation is worthy of examination from various angles.

IV. *Characteristics of the Translation of the Qur’an by T. Izutsu*

1. **Colloquial Expressions**

First, we shall start with rather simple examples. In what follows, the first line is the transcription of the original text of the Qur’an. The second line is the English translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (Abdel Haleem 2004), and the third line is the Japanese translation by Toshihiko Izutsu.

Example I:

r-raḥmānu ‘ala l-‘arši stawā (Taha, 5)
 the Lord of Mercy, established on the throne (Taha, 5)
 玉座にどっかと腰おろし給うお情ぶかい御神。

Example II:

wa-’iḏā qīla la-hum lā twfsidū fī l-’arḏi qālū ’inna-mā naḥnu muṣliḥūna ’alā ’innahum hum l-mufsidūna wa-lakin lā yaš’rūna (Al-Baqara, 11-12)
 When it is said to them, ‘Do not cause corruption in the land,’ they say, ‘We are only putting things right,’ but they are causing corruption, though they do not realize it. (The Cow, 11-12)
 彼らに向って「地上で悪いことばかりするな」と言えば、彼らは、「なにわしらは世の中

を善くしようとしているだけだ」などと言う。何んの、何んの、彼らこそ世を墮落さす者どもだ。だが自分ではそれに気付いていない。

Example III:

qāla 'inna-mā 'ūtītu-hu 'ala'ilmin 'ind-ī 'a-wa-lam ya'lam 'anna llāha qad 'ahlaka min qabli-hi mina l-qurūni manhuwa 'ašaddu min-hu quwwatin wa 'aktaru jama'a (Al-Qasas, 78)

but he answered, 'This wealth was given to me on account of the knowledge I possess.' Did he not know that God had destroyed many generations before him, who had greater power than him and built up greater wealth? (Story, 78)

彼の言うよう、「なあに、これを授かったのも、元はと言やあみなわしの生れついでのの智慧のおかげだ」と。なんということだ。今までにもアッラーは、あの男よりもっと力もあり、もっと手下も多い人々すら何代も何代も滅ぼしておしまいになったことを彼は知らないのか。

As seen above, Izutsu's style is unique in that it uses without hesitation very colloquial elements as underlined. For example, the expression 「どっかと」 in example I is a colloquial imitative word that describes the behavior of a person sitting down heavily and is seldom used in literary style. This expression might suggest a familiar intimate atmosphere and give readers the impression of God possessing a human body. In contrast, the verb phrase “‘ala l-‘arši stawā” in the Arabic original is a very solemn expression and using it for human beings would be difficult. There is no indication of the behavior of “sitting down” contained within it. Additionally, the use of words of interjection such as 「何」「何の」「なあに」 and euphonic change such as 「言やあ」 are also noteworthy, because such elements are rarely used in written literary language, and are only used in the familiar vulgar style.

From the Islamic viewpoint, God is a transcendent existence for which no analogy with creatures can be drawn. Therefore, it is not possible to use anthropomorphic expressions for God. If so, the translation of Izutsu which says that God “sits down heavily” would be based on a very audacious choice that may suggest God has a human-like body. Even when viewed only from these examples, we can see Izutsu intentionally selected the colloquial register — in some cases low level types — for the expression of the Qur'an.

2. Indication of Modality Using Grammatical Particles

Example IV:

inna-nī 'anā llāhu lā 'ilāha 'illā 'anā fa-'bud-nī wa-'aḳimi ṣ-ṣalāta li-dīkrī (Taha, 14)

I am God; there is no God but Me, so worship Me and keep up the prayer so that you remember Me. (Taha, 14)

われこそはアッラーであるぞよ。このわしのほかに神はない。さればわしに仕えよ。わしを心に念じて礼拝せよ。

Example V:

wa-mā kunta tarjū 'an yulqā 'ilay-ka l-kitābu 'illā raḥmatan min rabbi-ka fa-lā takūna-nna zahīran li-l-kāfirīna (Al-Qasas, 86)

You yourself could not have expected the Scripture to be sent to you; it came only as a mercy from your Lord. So give no help to the disbelievers. (The Story, 86)

汝にしても別にはじめから自分に啓典が載けると思っていたわけではあるまい。みんな

の主のお情あればこそ、だからどのようなことがあろうと信仰なき者どもの仲間だけに
はなるなよ。

Example VI:

fa-ḡkurū-nī 'aḡkur-kum wa-škurū l-ī wa-lā takfurū-ni (AL-Baqara, 152)

So remember Me; I will remember you. Be thankful to Me, and never ungrateful. (The Cow, 152)

それ故、汝らこのわしのことを忘れてはならぬぞ。さすれば、わしも汝らのことを忘れ
はせぬ。わしに感謝するのじゃ。わしに向って忘恩の振舞するでないぞ。

As the above examples show, one of the most salient characteristics in the translation by Izutsu is the frequent use of particles that are called Shu-josi 終助詞 according to the Japanese grammatical term in the final position of the sentence. Words such as 「ぞ」「ぞよ」「よ」「じゃ」 belong to this category. If we seek to correctly understand Izutsu's choice, we must take into consideration the role of such particles in the Japanese language.

The particle in the final position of the sentence in Japanese is one of the means to express the “modality” of the expression. According to linguistics, the semantic structure of a sentence can be divided into two parts: one indicates the subjectivity of speakers, and the other indicates objective content of the sentence. The former is called “modality.” In modality, for example, we can include the speaker's attitude toward the semantic content of the sentence, such as assertion, assumption, negation, interrogation and the interpersonal relationship between speaker and hearer, for example social status, age, gender, etc. Particles in the final position of the sentence in Japanese play both functions, but as for interpersonal modality, it appears only in spoken utterances, never in written style.

One of the characteristics of these particles lies in making salient various attributes of the speaker. The use of particles could suggest the age or gender of the speaker. For example, if you say “ame ga furu-ze” (it rains) you consider the speaker to be male because the particle “-ze” indicates masculinity. On the contrary, if you say “ame ga furu-wa”, you consider it to be a woman who is speaking because of the use of “-wa”. Interestingly, in ordinary conversation in Japanese, almost every utterance has these particles such that use of the default form without any particles would feel stiff and unnatural.

Important is the fact that these particles are firmly associated with the stereotypical image of the speaker, whether it is really used or not. Satoshi Kinsui, a Japanese linguist, named such usage “Yakuwari-go (役割語, words of role-relationship). Kinsui's definition of “Yakuwari-go” is as follows.

When you can imagine a particular character on hearing a particular use of words, or, if a particular character is presented, you can call to mind a use of words he would typically say, we call this way of words “Yakuwari-go”. (Kinsui 2003: 205)

Among “yakuwari-go” we have “rojin-go” (老人語, an old man word) typically used by old men (Kinsui 2003: 1-28). When we read fiction or manga, the use of these words can only ever evoke an image of an old man without any further explanations required. The pronoun “wasi” and particles “ja” and “zo” that are used in the translation of Izutsu typically belong to “rojin-go (老人語)” such that a reader inevitably imagines the sender of the message to be an old man.

We can consider the frequent use of these particles from another angle. According to

Roman Jakobson (Jakobson 1960), the renowned structural linguist, communication events consist of six factors, that is, sender, receiver, message, code, context, contact, and each factor has its corresponding function such as expressive, evocative, poetic, metalinguistic, referential and phatic functions. As seen above, particles at the end of a sentence are associated not with the semantic content of the sentence, but with the subjective attitude of the speaker or the relation between the speaker and hearer. Accordingly, following Jakobson's scheme, these particles have expressive, evocative and phatic functions. The use of these particles suggests that a speaker and a hearer share the same situation of utterances. In other words, these particles imply the relationship of "call and response" between the first person and the second person. On the contrary, in the written language, since a reader and a writer do not share the same situation of utterances, the function between the first and the second person recedes into the background and instead, the referential function emerges in the foreground. This is the reason these particles are seldom used in the written language, except in the description of actual conversation.

Therefore, why did Izutsu frequently use such particles and emphasize the interpersonal relations to an extent rarely found in ordinary written discourse? This question touches on the essence of Izutsu's understanding of Islam. The Qur'an consists of words that God sent to the prophet Muhammad or Muslims in general. In this sense, the textual structure of the Qur'an is based on the call and response between the first and the second person. Certainly, it does not mean the discourse from the third person does not appear in the Qur'an. The fact remains the same also in the Qur'an that as narrative discourse increases, referential function becomes strengthened. However, it is important to note that God and Muslims reciting the Qur'an share the same situation of utterances in the manner of God's call to Muslims and Muslims responding to God.

It is probably because Izutsu sought to emphasize the aspect of this "sharing the same situation of utterance" that he took the bold step of using such colloquial particles. According to the teaching of Islam, God, the Creator of the world, is a transcendental existence far beyond that of human beings, and, at the same time, exists "closer to him[man] than his jugular vein" (Qaaf, 16). The distance between God and Muslims is far and near. Probably Izutsu thought the stiffness of the written style was inadequate for expressing this "nearness". Colloquial particles that appear frequently in the translation by Izutsu indicate such translation strategy created by him.

3. Pronouns and Address Terms

The same could be said not only about articles, but also for pronouns and address terms in the translation by Izutsu. Please see below.

Example VII:

'a-farā'aytum mmā tumnūna 'a-āntum taxluqūna-hu 'am nahnu l-xāliqūna (Al-Waqi'a, 58-59)
Consider [the semen] you eject — do you create it yourselves or are We the Creator? (That which is coming, 58-59)

おい、お前たち、まあ考えてもごらん。お前たちが漏らす例のもの(精液)、あれはお前たちが創るのか、それとも我らが創るのか。(恐ろしい出来事章 58-59節、井筒訳)

Example VIII:

'a-farā'aytum mmā taḥruṭūna 'a-āntum tazra'ūna-hu 'am naḥnu z-zāri'ūna (Al-Waqi'a, 63-64)
 Consider the seeds you sow in the ground — is it you who make them grow or We? (That which is coming, 63-64)

これ、お前たち、まあ考えても見るがよい。お前たちの耕す(畑)、あれはお前たち自分で種蒔くのか。それとも種蒔きは我らがするのか。(恐ろしい出来事章 63-64節、井筒訳)

As the examples above show, in the translation by Izutsu, the pronoun “omae-tachi” is used when God speaks to mankind. “Omae” is the second person and “tachi” is the suffix to indicate plural. Japanese has various pronouns according to the context where the utterance is delivered. The pronoun “omae” is used for the second person in a somewhat colloquial style compared with “anata”. In addition, “omae-tachi” is not only a pronoun in the proper sense, but also has the function of an address term used in the same way as an interjection. Also, “oi” and “kore” placed before “omae-tachi” are also interjections for calling attention toward the hearer. In addition, the interjectional word “maa” is often added when the imperative form of the verb is used. This word only emphasizes the meaning of imperative, and without it the meaning of the sentence remains the same. All of these elements strengthen the character of the direct spoken interaction between the first and second person.

V. Comparison with Other Translations

It should be noted that Izutsu's translation that is commonly available now is a revised version of Izutsu 1957-58. That is, Izutsu 1957-58 is the first complete translation of the Qur'an in the true sense of the word. However, Izutsu had to undertake the task of revision. Why? It is because his translation was criticized as containing too many vulgar expressions that were stylistically inappropriate for the holy text. Faced with such severe criticism, Izutsu had to replace words and expressions that would be felt as being too colloquial with more modest types. However, in spite of his efforts, colloquial words and expressions still remained even in the revised version. This can be clearly understood if compared with other translators' versions, all of which were published after that by Izutsu. In what follows, four passages are selected from the examples cited above. The first line is an older version of Izutsu, the second is his revised version, and below them are other translations ordered chronologically.

Example I' (Ta Ha: 5)

玉座にどっかと腰おろし給うお情ぶかい御神様。(Izutsu 1957-58)

玉座にどっかと腰おろし給うお情ぶかい御神。(Izutsu 1964)

この慈悲ぶかいお方は玉座に登っていたもう。(Fujimoto 1970)

慈悲深き御方は、玉座に鎮座なされる。(Mita 1982)

慈悲あまねき御方で、高御座の上に座し給うた。(Nakata 2014)

Example III' (Story: 78)

奴の言い草がどうじゃ。「なあに、これを授かったのも、元はと言やあみんなわしの生れついでのお恵のおかげよ」だと。なんということだ。今までにもアッラーは、あいつよりもっと力もあり、もっと手下も多い奴らだっただて何代も何代も滅ぼしておしまいになったことをあいつ知らんのか。(Izutsu 1957-58)

彼の言うよう、「なあに、これを授かったのも、元はと言やあみなわしの生れついでのお

智恵のおかげだ」と。なんということだ。今までにもアッラーは、あの男よりもっと力もあり、もっと手下も多い人々すら何代も何代も滅ぼしておしまいになったことを彼は知らないのか。(Izutsu 1964)

カールーンは言った、「これらが授けられたのは、わたしの知識のゆえである」。彼は、神が、彼以前の幾世代の中で彼より力強く、財宝を山と積んだ者を滅ぼしたもうたことを知らなかったのだろうか。(Fujimoto 1970)

かれは言った。「これを授かったのも、わたしが持っている知識(能力)のためである。」アッラーがかれ以前に、いく世代を滅ぼしたかを、知らなかったのか。かれらは力の点でかれよりも強く、蓄えも巨額であった。(Mita 1982)

彼は言った。「私がそれを与えられたのは、私の許にある知識のみによる」。彼は知らなかったのか、アッラーが彼以前にも幾世代ものうちから、彼よりも力が強く、蓄えも多かった者を滅ぼし給うたことを。(Nakata 2014)

Example V' (Story: 86)

お前だって別にはじめから自分に啓典が戴けると思っていたわけじゃあるまいが。みんな主のお情あればこそだぞ。な、だからお前どんなことがあろうと罰当たりどもの仲間にはなるなよ。(Izutsu 1957-58)

汝にしても別にはじめから自分に啓典が戴けると思っていたわけではあるまい。みんなの主のお情あればこそ、だからどのようなことがあろうと信仰なき者どもの仲間にはなるなよ。(Izutsu 1964)

汝は、啓典が授けられるなどと予想してはいなかった。これは、ひとえに汝の主のお慈悲によるものである。よって、背信者どもの助け手となってはならない。(Fujimoto 1970)

啓典があなたに届けられることは、あなたの予期しなかったところで、偏(ひとえ)にあなたの主からの慈悲である。だから決して不信心者を支持してはならない。(Mita 1982)

またおまえに啓典(クルアーン)が下されることをおまえは期待していなかったが、ただ、おまえの主からの慈悲としてであった。それゆえ、不信仰者たちの助力者となってはならない。(Nakata 2014)

Example VI' (Cow: 152)

それ故、お前たちこのわしのことを忘れるでないぞ。さすれば、わしもお前たちのことを忘れはせん。わしに感謝するのじゃ。わしに向って罰当たりな振舞をするでないぞ。(Izutsu 1957-58)

それ故、汝らこのわしのことを忘れてはならぬぞ。さすれば、わしも汝らのことを忘れはせぬ。わしに感謝するのじゃ。わしに向って忘恩の振舞するでないぞ。(Izutsu 1964)

それゆえ、このわしを覚えよ。そうすれば、このわしもおまえたちを覚えておこう。わしに感謝せよ。わしにたいして背信の態度をとってはならぬ。(Fujimoto 1970)

だからわれを念じなさい。そうすればわれもあなたがたに就いて考慮するであろう。われに感謝し、恩を忘れてはならない。(Mita 1982)

それゆえ、われを念じよ、われはおまえたちを念じる。われに感謝せよ、われに背信してはならない。(Nakata 2014)

As shown above, Izutsu's tendency toward colloquialism stands out conspicuously among other Japanese translations of the Qur'an, all of which adopted a conventional literary style. It is almost as if other translators regard Izutsu's translation as a negative example and try to

distance themselves from the colloquial style unique to Izutsu by all possible means. In fact, Izutsu's style could be considered rather unique even when viewed in the history of translation of modern Japan. Where did Izutsu's uniqueness come from? Clearly, his style choice is not simply based on his personal preference of words. It is possible that Izutsu's colloquial style would derive from his own understanding of Islam and the Qur'an as a scholar of religion. We discuss this issue in the following section.

VI. *Colloquialism as a Strategy of Translation — What Does It Mean?*

As a whole, there is a strong tendency toward colloquialism in Izutsu's translation; various colloquial words, particles usually used in conversation, address terms, etc. are utilized. This gives the impression that there are too many mundane expressions for a holy religious text in Izutsu's translation. However, it is important to note that this does not come from the translator's personal choice, but from the difference in the discursive formation between Arabic and Japanese. In Japanese, it is difficult to make these two different directions of style co-exist, that is, one that expresses emotionally the sharing of the context of utterance between participants, and the other that describes awesome objects in a sublime way. Roughly speaking, the former is colloquial style, and the latter is a literary one. Correspondingly, emotional involvement and sublime expressions are different in Japanese expression, while, as noted below, these two directions are found at the same time in the style of the Qur'an. In such situation, the Japanese translator would be faced with the dilemma of choosing between familiarity and solemnity. Izutsu probably then decided to take the direction of colloquialism even if it were at the expense of the solemn atmosphere in the Qur'an. In the famous terms of Y. Nida, it could be said that Izutsu gave priority to domestication strategy instead of foreignization.

Certainly, it would be almost impossible to reproduce the features of Qur'anic style, which is inseparable from the Classical Arabic, in Japanese without modifications. The translator is forced to adopt some aspects and relinquish other aspects. This choice has something to do not only with various constituents of the text, but also with the pragmatic context including cultural and societal circumstances. The sum of these choices and decisions constitutes the translation strategy which gives the translator a direction for solutions each time he is faced with dilemmas.

It could be said that Izutsu understood some aspects of the Qur'anic style in a precise way. In the postscript to the translation, Izutsu stated the reasons why he adopted a colloquial style for the translation of the Qur'an as follows. The Qur'an consists of the word that God directly delivered to Muhammad. In this sense, it should be expressed majestically. However, it is not possible to say that the literary style is more suitable. Certainly, if translated in the colloquial style, much would have to be abandoned. The Qur'an, however, has other aspects that could be expressed adequately in colloquial style. Therefore, if we dare to give up the majestic tone totally, it is not literary style but the colloquial type that can make the most of what the Qur'anic style possesses. From the viewpoint of Arabs of that time, even though the style called "saj'" renders the tone of the Qur'an rather majestic and literary, vocabularies and expressions that aim for expressiveness are considerably colloquial. In the Qur'an, several lively expressions that would be used by merchants of Mecca add more vitality to the text. Seen from this

perspective, we could say the style of the Qur'an can be regarded as familiar and intimate as well as majestic, but neither stiff nor aloof. (Izutsu 1992: 857-8)

Izutsu's observation that the style of the Qur'an is "intimate as well as majestic" is also relevant to the problem of the translation strategy. Abdel Haleem, translator of the Qur'an in English, said that "in addition to *al-jumla 'l-khabariyya* (declarative statement) there is an unusually high frequency of *al-jumla 'l-inshā'iyya* (affective statement)" (Abdel Haleem 2001: 206), and paid attention to "the dynamic style which is an inseparable part of the power and effect of the Qur'anic message" (Abdel Haleem 2001: 210). "*al-jumla 'l-inshā'iyya*" mentioned here is nothing but a performative speech-act whereby a first person appeals to a second person through various means such as questions, orders, promises, persuasion, etc. This type of speech-act gives powerful emotion unique to expressions of the Qur'an. Alternatively, Clive Holes, distinguished Arabic scholar, pointed out "the simplicity of the Koranic[sic] *ʔa:ya* ('verse')" and said, "it is small wonder that foreign learners of Arabic generally find the Koran[sic] easier to understand than the poetry: for all its sometimes ecstatic and exhortatory language, its directness and relative lack of syntactic and phraseological artifice are reminiscent of actual speech" (Holes 2004: 16). At the same time, Holes also pointed out "the use of an elevated diction" as the common trait between the Qur'an and the poetry. That is to say, the important characteristic of the texture of the Qur'an consists of the elevated sublime style and the immediacy of emotional expressions being inseparably connected to each other.

VII. Conclusion

In this study we examine whether such Arabic style can be transplanted into Japanese. In Japanese, we can observe a kind of role-division between written style and spoken style: the former is descriptive, objective, and non-emotional while the latter is subjective, emotion-laden, and context-dependent. Therefore, the question of whether the Qur'an, written in emotion-laden but sublime style, should be translated in written or spoken style would be difficult to answer for the translator in Japanese. The difference of discourse formation between the source language and target language, especially the difference of the relationship between spoken style and written style, would be a relevant factor that renders the translation of the Qur'an problematic.

Lastly, it must be said that all the translators of the Qur'an after Izutsu adopted a literary style that follows the norms of the written language, and did not use as much colloquialism as Izutsu did. Accordingly, the translation of the Qur'an by Izutsu can be said to be a bold adventure. It has remained a peculiar exception not only in the history of translation of the Qur'an, but also in the entire history of translation in Modern Japan. Translation is not an act to be accomplished at one time. It is an ongoing dialogue between two different languages and cultures. Although it has some limits, Izutsu's translation of the Qur'an can be considered as one important step in understanding Islam in Japan. This process of understanding continues even today.

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