



Mohammed Al-Bussairi (*)

A Towering Linguistic Figure from Sudan

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Abstract: This paper sheds light on the late Mohammed AlBusairi affluent academic journey. I will trace his education and his work experience in teaching, supervision, translation, literature, with special focus on his writings on lexicography and dictionary making. We will read some of his works with critical clues. The man had a massive contribution to education in the Sudan, in general, and the Education of English Language in particular. Many Sudanese students, as well as others from abroad, at both graduate and post quadrate levels, were/are indebted to him as a teacher and supervisor of their work. With his great knowledge, experience, craftsmanship in his trade, AlBussairi was a highly distinguished figure among his colleague in the trade, at the local and regional levels. This paper is appreciating his efforts as a talented teacher, educator and a highly gifted translator and lexicographer.

Keywords: Al Bussairi-Sudan-Linguist-Translator-Lexicographer-Khartoum University..

1. BRIEF HISTORY

On 7th of January 2011, we have missed Professor Mohammed Al-Busairi, (may Allah make his soul rest in peace). The deceased was born in Berber in 1940, where he had his general education. Then he left for Lebanon to join the American University in Beirut for his first degree in 1964, in the English Language philology, in addition to a Teaching Certificate. Seven years later, he left for Manchester to read for his MA in the same filed. Firstly, he got a Diploma in teaching English Overseas (TEO) in 1971; immediately followed by an MA in English Philology in (Applied Linguistics) in 1972. Then he read for his Ph.D in psycholinguistics in the University of Lancaster in 1972 under the supervision of professor Dick Allwrightt, whom he dedicated some of his books for his "...unfailing support through the years." as he said. AlBussiari (2004 p iii).

The late professor had a rich experience as a teacher and researcher in many fields of the English Language. He was a leading and daring figure to shoulder the burden of supervising many MA and PhD theses and dissertations; when this area was witnessing a severe shortage of expert professors to shoulder such responsibly at this higher standard of tertiary education.

His work experience extended from Kuwait to Sudan, where he taught many undergraduate and graduate courses of EL in most of the Sudanese Universities. He chaired the English Department, in the Faculty of Arts in Khartoum University, where he was able to share his teaching and writing skills in many areas of EL, including translation and lexicography.

I have been acquainted with late Muhammad AlBussiari (May Allah make his soul rest in peace) several years ago. I have to admit–here-that my knowledge of the guy was not that very much (authenticated) as I was not directly engaged with him in any business. I was neither his *direct* student nor a colleague. Therefore, I can just say that we were some sort of friends. I was regularly used to dropping at his office in the Faculty of Arts-Khartoum University, whenever I was back from abroad or available in the Sudan.

During those visits we used to handle many issues about English Language Education in the Sudan. I was so much interested in his long experience and expertise in ELT. I used to spend many hours with him in his office; and he was so generous to give me some of his writings and books. In fact he had

given me many copies of his books as well as some drafts of articles. So due to this limited knowledge I can say that my resources are *relatively* limited; but thanks are due to many of his students who were my main source of data that helped me to trace his efforts in teaching and writing.

1.1. The Need of Such Research

This research is not a direct investigation in the area of applied linguistics, but it is *relevant* to Language Education in general. The history of English in the Sudan, and the history of teaching English in particular, is an area neglected by most researchers. We practically need to read the development of English Teaching History in our country; as this kind of investigation will help researchers evaluate the efforts of some effective people in this area. The late professor's role in the field would need to be reflected to people in general; and to the *teaching force* of English in particular. This paper is a sort of commemoration and recognition of his undeniable efforts in the field of ELT in our country.

1.2. So our Objectives may Include

- Sharing knowledge about the deceased in the field of ELT, and introducing him as a courageous and daring leader, to our coming generations to trace the man's line and assimilate his wisdom to develop their performances in language teaching and learning.
- Reflecting his talents, efforts and skills as a teacher, researcher, academic advisor, translator, an author and lexicographer as well.
- Making some critical reading of his works that reflect his various talents and craftsmanship in many areas of writing.

1.3. The Significance of the Research

The research is targeting many audiences:

- *EL students* as it will introduce a man who was a bright language teacher gifted and equipped with high knowledge and skills.
- *EL teachers* as the late professor's performance in teaching can help them develop their own teaching skills and expertise.
- *Translators & Lexicographers* who will benefit from great ideas about this art.
- *Syllabus designers* to widen their scope of writing suitable materials to learners according to needs and age.
- *Decision makers* to modify the general policy of education, to achieve the national agendas of language education, to enable our graduates compete in such a fast developing and challenging world economy.

1.4. Methodology and Data Collecting

As this paper is a bibliography of AlBusairi, the data was collected through oral resources or witnesses. Authentic material was lacking so oral contact was used to elicit information from some people, who were either close friends, relatives or students of the late professor.

1.5. Delimits

The whole research is based on oral data and on some limited resources, as the topic had not been trodden and nobody to the best of my knowledge, wrote some of the history of this man. So this may explain some of the shortcomings of this paper.

2. WORK EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

In this paper I will try to reflect the professor's life from the following perspectives. His long successful journey had included many stations. So we will see AlBusairi as:

1. A Teacher
2. A Researcher
3. A Translator
4. An Academic Adviser

5. An Author

2.1. Education

2.1.1. Teacher

The late professor had a rich experience as a teacher. He began his career as a teacher and head department of English in the secondary school level in the Sudan. He taught at AlMakala Secondary School and the Junior Female Teacher Training Institute. Then he left the country to join The Kuwait University where he had been teaching for a long time until he was forced to leave Kuwait during the Iraqi Invasion.

This period had great effect on his life and on his family life as well. When he was back to Sudan he joined many educational intuitions of higher education. He lectured at many universities such as Khartoum University, Nilien University, Wadi Eneel University and many other private universities in the national capital. He was nominated as expert in the Arab Origination of Culture, Education and Science and as lecturer in the Institute of Arabic for Non-Speakers in Khartoum.

2.1.2. General Education

As Secondary School Teacher and teacher trainer, AlBussiari was always consulted as an expert in the general education, in the field of language pedagogy. He offered his teaching ideas in many events as a consultant to some educational organizations. He was always sorry to express his unhappiness with the English language education in the country especially at the general education levels in schools. Here we can trace his great ideas in this particular paper presented as a critical perspective of SPINE English Textbooks for the general education in the Sudan. The paper was presented in a workshop held by the Open University of Sudan in collaboration with Cambridge University, the Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Reach in addition to the Ministry of General Education and the NCCER, in Khartoum from 10 to 11 June 2008.

Professor Bussairi was aware of the problem of the deterioration of the English Language standard among tertiary students, as a professor, in daily contact with students in his office or in their theatres.

He investigated and described the language situation in the general education level with a paper entitled "*The Situation of English at the Tertiary Education Level in the Sudan*" saying that, "New university entrants come with poor English or with no English at all. Most of them could hardly write a brief paragraph in simple English and one in four university entrants are unable to construct even an elementary sentence." Bussairi (2008).

So aiming to solve this problem of poor language education, "an attempt to stop the drop in the standard syllabus, teacher training programme, teaching methods and textbooks were changed. Thus 'SPINE' (Sudan, Practical, Integrated National English Syllabus) came out to contribute to the termination of this steep decline which has been the concern of almost everybody in the country." Bussairi:2008 p1).

But AlBussiri was not happy with the change as considering (SPINE) a failure project because he believed that, "...the new series came to be in consonance with the policies of Arabicization and Reorigination of knowledge. Each of them was misunderstood by their advocates, proponents and even by some of their open-minded supporters as being one way process." AlBussairi was clear about the meaning of the two ideological terms (Arabicization and Reorigination of Knowledge). He said that:

Arabicization was misunderstood as only the transmission of knowledge from the foreign language to Arabic and Reorigination of Knowledge as involving only verification and publicity of books of heritage. However, each to my understanding is a two-way process. Thus, both require a thorough knowledge of the foreign language and understanding its culture. Since both involve the transmission of our culture and heritage into the foreign language as well." (ibid,2008 p3)

AlBussiri believed that English had defied Arabicization since it was in the same footing with Arabic (both are languages) and had defied Reogination of knowledge because it was neither part of our culture nor of our heritage, as he believed. Then he came to the conclusion that. "to satisfy political

demands the English syllabus was ‘Sudaniezd’. He so believed that the influence of the foreign language culture was exaggerated by some writers who expressed their fears that teaching English in its cultural context was likely to be threatening to the students’ identity and culture. He assured that, this would never happen as he believed and supported his discussion with a good quotation from (McLeod, 1973:540), “that by teaching a language one is inevitably already teaching culture implicitly, and when people learn a language other than their own, they participate to some extent in target language culture.” Ibid (2008p 3).

So AlBussairi believed that language textbooks were/are assumed to provide a link between the target language culture and the students’ culture. Furthermore, the topic of cultural differences offers almost supply of relevant, realistic content for incorporation in the textbook.

From these ideas, we may come to understand that the professor was not happy with SPINE Textbooks as a suitable syllabus to serve the objectives of teaching the English as a foreign language in our country. In fact he made very good discussions and raised very technical objections against the Series of SPINE.

First, he was not happy with the physical make up of the series and saw it as (unattractive). He said the books were not attractive, even from the cover page each book in the series was decorated with drawing familiar scene, similarly the illustrations were familiar, and with’ faint colour, blur and sometimes misleading’. Then he gave examples from Book 2and 6 to support his point.

The professor was also not happy with the content of the books. He talked about the cultural components of the books saying, that:

“For the textbooks to achieve highly desirable effects on the learner they should attract the learners’ curiosity, interest and attention through less familiar and unusual topics, illustrations and activities. The topic should provide human interest and stipulate cultural and personal comparisons. in terms of Language; textbooks should be generative and motivate students to want to talk or write. They should stimulate good thinking and develop critical thinking.” Moreover, to break the monotony of the unit routine unexpected activity should be included and many text types taken from different types of sources be used. The presentation should be attractive by using attractive colours and photographs.” (ibid:2008 p6).

Then he did not ignore the impact of other factors in teaching and learning. The man was not happy with the series in general and he believed that,

“ the ‘SPINE books aimed at teaching and developing the skills of listening and speaking, and reading and writing . However it seems that the series promises more that it gives. The Listening and speaking are completely neglected and reading and writing are poorly provided for.” (ibid:2008 p7).

The professor came to make his conclusion by saying, “On the whole, ‘SPINE’ course teaches fragments of language which are rarely exercised or not practised at all and hardly consolidated with exercise or adequately reviewed.” He gave many examples of failure such as the lack of teaching the language sound system, to help students practice and understand speech. The language of “SPINE’ is, on the whole, “unnatural’. He gave examples from Book (1) as in making such a silly questions like: **(Is Hamid a man?)**.

The Professor thought that all the dialogues in the series were scripted dialogues constructed for the purpose of language teaching. He also gave an example of an authenticated dialogue from Book 6, which is the last book of the series. At the end of his paper the professor asked why the previous syllabus NILE Course was dismissed and replaced by ‘SPINE’ series although as he said,” I found that the language of the Nile Course more natural, current, appropriate and correct. The dialogues are authentic and the reading topics are very interesting to stimulate children to read and write. Above all the topics were taken from different types of sources and provided a link between Sudanese culture and English culture.” (ibid: 2008 p7)

2.1.3. Academic Advisor

Albusairi worked as head Department of English in the Faculty of Arts in Khartoum University; during this period the unit witnessed an un-preceded activity in the field of postgraduate studies. The

late professor supervised more than 48 MAs theses and Ph.D desertsions. He was a pioneer in leading many Sudanese students and some others to read for Master’s and PhDs in the English Language. He helped those young men and women by supervising about 23 PhDs dissertations and about than 25 MA theses from different institutes inside and outside Sudan.

Dr. Amana Badri of the Ahfad University for Women, a professor of linguistics, for example, said that she had benefited from her training under ALBusiari’s supervision in writing her Ph.D. She said she was not only grateful for the man’s guidance but also for the great experience she herself has obtained from the professor in doing research and helping other students do research in a perfect way. Many students, who got their PhDs under the supervision of the late professor, are holding academic positions now as full professors in their Education Organizations. A few names can be mentioned here. Professor Ibrahim Mohammed Al-Faki and Mustafa Shazali of Wadi A-Neel University, Professor Abdul Almahmood Idris of Alzaeem Al-Azhari, professor Al-Saddig Yahya Ezzah of Khartoum University, Professor Amna Badri of Ahfad University for Women, professor Mohammed Alshengiti of Rabat university and professor Omar Hajjo of the Open University of Sudan, who started with professor Bussairi his first errand in his Ph.D, in addition to many others whose names have missed me to mention now. These people themselves have made and are still making great contribution in higher Education in the ELT field.

Professor AlBusairi was a well known figure in the ELT international meetings and conferees as he contributed widely with papers and speeches in many local and international arenas. He read and presented papers in the field of modern linguistics, English education, translation and teaching. He had many research in ELT in many local and international periodicals. In this paper we will go through some of his work with critical eye to reflect the efforts of the man as a pioneer in ELT in the Sudan. He was an effective figure whose work had affected and inspired many people including his vast number of students and colleagues.

3. AUTHORSHIP: CRITICAL READING ON ALBUSSAIRI’S BOOKS

Muhammad AlBusairi to the best of my knowledge was the most productive EL teacher in the field of authorship. He has written many books in different aspects of Language Education. In this section I am going to go over the most works which are embedded in several books. But the first notice we need to make is the great efforts exerted by the man to bring such books to life in such an age, over 60, as most of those books were written during 1994 to 2011 the time of his death. Here is a list of his books.

Table1. Books authored by Muhammad AlBussairi

No	book Title	Date of publication	Place of publication	discipline
1	اساسيات علم الاصوات-الكتاب الاول	1999	Khartoum University Press	Phonetics
2	اساسيات علم الاصوات-الكتاب الثاني	1999	Khartoum University Press	Phonetics
3	Stories told and Retold 1	2009	Khartoum University Press	Literature
4	Stories told and Retold 2	2010	Khartoum University Press	Literature
5	The Language Learner in Focus	2004	Khartoum University Press	Psycholinguistics
6	A Dictionary of Islamic Juristic Terminologies	2005	دار السداد للطباعة	Lexicography
7	Conscious of Africa	Translation
8	Pragmatics	linguistics

3.1. Phonetics

1	الكتاب الاول اساسيات علم الاصوات	Date of publication 1999	Khartoum University Press	Phonetics
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This is one of AlBussair’s first writing in Arabic. He gave his book the title of (اساسيات علم الاصوات –الكتاب الاول) (The Basics of Phonetics). The book was basically written as notes for students of Khartoum Polytechnic College sometimes ago as the students did not have a textbook for this subject. The Book was basically written in Arabic as the first attempt of its kind in this field of applied linguistics. The book can be considered a real addition to the Arab library in the area of phonetics, as the first books of its kind, as the author himself said about it. (ibid: 12). The book was written in Arabic to serve the following objectives:

1. To facilitate teaching and learning for both teachers and students.
2. Students will benefit of time and efforts when they are instructed in their mother tongue.
3. To make the study of (phonetics) common to all students all over the Arabic World instead of being taught to students of English alone.
4. Mastering phonetics can help improve reading the Holy Quran on scientific bases. (Sudanese have some difficulties in the production of some sounds in Arabic such as {س/ش/ص/} - {ذ/ذ/} - {ز/} - {ق/ vs /غ/}.
5. Revival of the Arabic Language and improving phonetics in Arabic by describing, sorting and analysing the sounds of Arabic compared with the English phonology. In this way both students of Arabic and English will benefit from this knowledge.
6. Establishing and dispersing the Arabic terminology of phonology and phonetics.
7. Providing students of other languages with some background of phonetics. See (البوصيري ص12 - 1999)

The book –in two parts -as the author said was written to fill the gap in the Arabic library, as such specialist books dealing with phonetics are lacking except some extracts embedded in general phonology, with some small additional parts in textbooks of linguistics. The book was also written to provide students at college level with a manual as a textbook. In my own opinion; the book is an addition to our knowledge as EL teachers as it has provided us with a wide range of practical knowledge about phonetics terminologies in Arabic. It can really enhance teaching phonetics in both Arabic and English languages. The book was provided with a glossary from page (92 to page 103) as a fast reference for the basic terminology which teachers may immediately need to refer to during their teaching inside classrooms.

3.2. Literature

2. Stories told and Retold 1 & 2.	2009	Khartoum University Press	Literature
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This book was composed of two small volumes about religious stories from the Holy Quran. The author was keen to write in religious literature as this was his intention for more than thirty years. He wrote in his introduction to Book 1 that:

“The need for producing English readers for our students has been felt since restrictions were made on imports in about the mid – seventies. Since then the idea of writing a series of readers has struck me. The ambition I have cherished in my mind for more than thirty years. It was only last year and apparently an accidental circumstance decided me. It was when I was asked to write an evaluative paper about the so called a ‘Spine’ by the Open University of Sudan (OUS).” (AlBusairi; 2009)

So the reason behind writing such volumes was a part of old dreams of the late professor. But the main reason behind the writing of the series as he said was:

“... Looking into Spine six book (and accompanying teacher books through which English is taught to our children in the basic and secondary levels; I was stunned by the language and material. The language is defective and the replica topics are trivial. They are neither enjoyable nor didactic.”(ibid: preface).

ALBusairi was not happy with Spine textbooks, so his project as he said “... was to write Quranic stories...and to relate each story as narrated by scriptures and books written by Muslim writers. The Quranic stories are to some extent similar to the previously told stories but not identical.” (ibid) So he started this Islamic project by retelling the famous story of (Yusuf), in a highly poetic style which can help young readers enjoy the story and benefit from its various teaching and didactic values. He saw the story as “ (explaining) the seeming contradictions in life, lasting nature of variety in a world full of human change in fortune and situation and portrayed the most varied aspects of life.” (ibid: preface).

He thought that (Yusuf) story in the Quran, has embedded many lessons about “...old age, parental love, jealousy, wickedness and trickery, grief and patience earthly love contrasted with spiritual love,

chastity and purity, low life and high life, honor conferred on the innocent, repentance, forgiveness, reclamation, beauty of piety and Truth.” (ibid: preface)

AlBusairi skillfully retold the story and dedicated it to the soul of one of his relatives and childhood friend who encouraged him to write down the story of Yusuf and other similar stories. (*See the preface for more details.*)

In the second book of the series; AlBusairi retold the story of Abraham (peace be upon him) and showed great expertise in using attractive story telling style which attracts youngsters to enjoy reading the story and benefit from its great wisdom; as “ the Quranic stories, on the other hand are less narratives than spiritual sermons and allegories in which every character or event is a symbol representing virtue, a moral, faith, truthfulness, honesty etc.” (ibid: preface)

3.3. Psycholinguistics

3	The Language Learner in Focus	2004	Khartoum University Press	Psycholinguistics
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This is the fifth book written by the late professor as a dissertation with which professor AlBusairi was qualified for his Ph.D in Psycholinguistics in 1990 from Lancaster University in UK. The man was proud with this work which was published in 2004 to be read at wide range of EL all over the world. I think the professor was the first Sudanese to write in this field of English Education. The work was well planned and prepared, full with ideas that made some parts of the book to be used as teaching materials for MA students in UK and U of K. He dedicated the book to his professor Dick Allwright for “his unfailing support through the years and for his request, which was an honour to the material which constitutes the book, to teach the background chapter of the Lancaster research to His M.A students. The professor also acknowledged his colleague and friend Dr. Meddani Othman for “...doing what Dick had done several years ago and teaching the contents of the book for his fourth linguistic year students at Khartoum University over the last years.” AlBusairi (2004, p iii).

3.3.1. *The Need for the Book*

AlBusairi believed that:

“The successive drop of students in English in schools and in the University of Khartoum and higher institute of Education and also in the newly established universities, has always been the concern of teachers and Sudanese Institutions, Ministries and firms since the 1960s. Syllabus has undergone several modifications. Textbooks and methods were recurrently changed and new sets of martial were developed.

So the man was aware of the problem of English teaching in Sudan from an early time. He noted that many:

“Committees were formed, and conferences were held in attempt to discover the reasons behind the continuous drop in standard so as to eradicate them. The research presented in all conferences and the committees’ terms of defences centred on teacher training, syllabus, textbooks and teaching methods. Later the blame was placed on Arabicization of general education. (But) Arabicization is not to blame since the new university entrants low achievement in English had already been observed, before the implementation of Arabicization of the general education in 1964.” AlBusairi (2004, p 1)

AlBusairi with a keen critical eye noticed that:

“(Sudanese) students admitted to the American University in Beirut had always been placed in the higher level English course. However, after 1964 the picture was reversed. Similarly in 1970 Sudanese University graduates sent on scholarship to Britain were required, for the first time, to improve their English by being enrolled in intensive courses. (ibid: 2004 p1)

Most of the research carried out in investigating the decline of English in the Sudan used to refer this decline to these factors:

1. Inadequate teacher training
2. Unsuitable syllabus or
3. Inappropriate method of teaching

4. Lack of teaching aids
5. Classroom crowdedness
6. Change of educational ladder

But ***motivation, aptitude and attitudes*** towards language learning were mostly ignored as basic reasons behind the deterioration of the English language standard in the Sudan. AlBusairi noticed this gap in our research in ELT in the Sudan so he wrote that:

“It seems that we had been so absorbed in the development of subject-centered curricula that we have almost forgotten about the students’ attitudes and needs. It is time. I think, to approach the problem through learning about the students’ motivation to learn, which are thought to be determined by both their needs for and attitudes towards learning English. Students seem not to be aware of the need they will have later for the use of English in their profession life.” AlBusairi (2004, p.2)

He found that the most overriding reason for students to read English was the need to pass their final English test. He believed that a great deal can be done towards an improved awareness of external awareness and the achievement of a more powerful motivation by providing for the students’ practical needs. The research done in this field by, to the best of my knowledge, AlBusairi; was pioneering and leading as the man was able to draw our attention to focus on the internal (intrinsic) factors of language acquisitions rather than the external (extrinsic) reasons which most Sudanese researchers in ELT used to hold onto. We can conclude the reading of this book by extracting this final note by the late professor that:

“By focusing on the learner, it is hoped that we will have information about needs for learning and also some enhanced knowledge of the affective domain and its contribution to a better learning situation” Albusairi (2004,p.2)

4. ALBUSAIRI AS LEXICOGRAPHER:

4.1. A Dictionary of Islamic Juristic Terminologies

We can easily feel the Islamic orientation of our late professor. Some of these orientations can easily be traced in his practical life as the man was so sweet in his company with all people, family, relatives, teachers, friends and students. The Islamic values can be felt in his religious writings as well. In the next section I will trace his valuable contribution in Islamic knowledge.

The late AlBusairi wrote a series of stories based on the tales retold from our Holy Book. He rewrote the story of Yusuf (peace be upon him) as his first contribution to provide the Islamic library with such literature for the young Muslim generation. Then he wrote Abraham as his second book in the series and he was desirous to continue this journey of Quranic stories, but death did not allow him to finish this project.

But luckily the professor was able to finish his masterpiece in my opinion; it was the dictionary of Islamic Juristic terminologies.

A Dictionary of Islamic Juristic Terminologies	2005	دار السداد للطباعة	Lexicography
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The book was published in 2005 by Dar Asadad publishing House. It was dedicated to all Muslims in all parts of the world. The forwarding was written by the late professor Awn Al-Shareef Gasim, who said that:

“As a matter of fact, this dictionary which is in our possession (Dear respectable reader) is distinguished from other dictionaries that it does not confine itself to the literal translational words, but to its detailed explanation of special terms. This alone makes this dictionary, on the point of becoming an Islamic jurisprudence Encyclopedia besides its lexicographical worth as work of lexicography.” (Preface)

Witting a dictionary in my opinion is like building a pyramid, both can remain as symbol of human creativity and reservoir of human extra-historical deeds. Building a pyramid is a communal effort needs physical material and the cooperation of people collectively, but building a dictionary is a different and difficult task if it is tackled by one person. Professor Awn also saw the work of professor Busairi as invaluable contribution to the Islamic Legal Knowledge. He believed that:

“Dr. AlBusairi devoted himself over many long years to produce this juristic dictionary (Arabic–English) in its present form which satisfies the aspirations of researchers and students of Islamic jurisprudence not only from among non-Arabic speakers but also for many of the Arabs and Muslims for whom it illuminated the track they trod in understanding many of the previously [seemed] ambiguous juristic terms.” Albusairi (2005,p.xv)

Writing this book (**A Dictionary of Islamic Juristic Terminologies**) filled a gap in this field of Islamic legal terminologies. The book is an authoritative source as according to Awn Shareef Gasim, who appraised the efforts of professor AlBusairi in compiling the dictionary, said, “That the dictionary is on the point of becoming an Islamic jurisprudence Encyclopedia besides its lexicographical worth as work of lexicography.” (See preface)

The story of compiling such a reference went back to 1985 when the author was appointed as a supervisor of the English Language Unit, in the Faculty of Sharia’a and Islamic Studies, Kuwait University. From that experience in working in the translation of Hadith, the author said that he had benefited from that experience as it evolved the idea of compiling an Islamic Terminologies Dictionary. AlBusairi (2005, p.xxvii)

In translating the Islamic texts as he said:

“ ... I was met with the difficulty of finding equivalents of Arabic terminologies in English. for the purpose I consulted “Mujam Luhgat Alfuqha” (Dictionary of Islamic Legal Terminology) by Dr. Muhammed Rawas Qalaji and Dr. Hamid Sadig Qunaibi., which to the best of my knowledge was the only Islamic special words dictionary available in 1990, However I discovered first, the compilers of the dictionary translate common meaning of words and neglect the terminological meanings.”

So the man was able to notice the short comings of the work of Qalaaji and Qunaibi in compiling a specialist dictionary of Islamic Terminologies. He brought many examples of wrong or inappropriate translation made by the above lexicographers such ‘terms’ their meanings were explained without reference to their special use. For example: (washer: وشر, dark: درك), kalala: كلاله, alqawad: القواعد). He noticed that many basic words such as sunna: سنة, sala: صلاة and raka: ركعة were not well translated. He gave appropriate translation to the legal and Sharia meaning of the terminologies. So his dictionary seems to be more accurate than of his predecessors. AlBusair in his book wanted to draw attention:

“...to the lack of bilingual Islamic dictionaries , to emphasize their vital importance and to reflect my experience in producing terms and concepts for the benefit of English speaking Muslims...and to promote the call for Islam locally and abroad. My aim is to achieve a transaction of Islamic terms and concepts which can be used by Muslim children brought up in the USA, Britain and other European countries.” (ibid:xxiv)

Through his long experience in the language teaching, the professor discovered the practical need of language students to dictionaries as essential learning tools for language students. Learners need to use and refer to all types of dictionaries. So he wrote about the importance of bilingual dictionaries saying that, “the first decision to be taken in compiling bilingual dictionary is the selection of words to be entered in the dictionary. Bussairi (b4). As far as the collection of the words goes, a good monolingual dictionary could serve as the basis for the planned bilingual one. He quoted (Zgusta:294), that the lexicographer himself has to do the selection, deal with the multiple meaning of each word and to coordinate with the lexical units of one language those lexical units of another language which are equivalent in their lexical meaning.”

4.2. Arabicization

Arabicization was one issue of the late professor’s concern. He made great contribution to share in this change with his long experience in the field. He noticed that almost all terminological dictionaries in the Arab world “are unidirectional” as he put it that, “ the source language has always been the foreign language and Arabic the target language. But after Arabicization in the Sudan the picture has changed by quoting his own words hen he said that:

“Students started to read books, perhaps journal and some of the relevant printed matter in the sciences and in modern technology in Arabic. The existing special dictionaries were compiled with the purpose of translation of foreign sciences into Arabic to serve the translator and the

teacher. Now the incessant need is for terminological dictionaries in which the order of the entries is given in Arabic. Bussairi (84)

So as to cope with the agendas of the national education objectives and to encourage the new trend of education by using the national language of the people, Bussairi believed that we need to, “establish our translated or invented or even transliterated Arabic terms as separate linguistic entities [so] our terminologies dictionaries should be uni-directional. However, this time from Arabic to the foreign language and never vice versa. And consequently the order of the entry will be given by Arabic, the source language.” (ibid).

In his article (the Quest first Ideal Dictionaries); AlBussiari discussed many issues concerning the technicalities of compiling dictionaries in the Arab world. He noticed the problem of alphabetization in some dictionaries as he put that:

The major problem caused by alphabetization, whether letter-by-letter or word-by-word is separating the different irregular word-forms from each other. For example in X dictionary the word ‘mouse’ is listed on page555while its plural form “mice” is listed 19 pages later, “men” is listed on page 458, 15 pages later than its singular...Similarly in one English-Arabic dictionary the past and the present tense forms are listed separately. For example the irregular past for of “weep’ is listed on page 1056,3 pages latter while 664 pages separate between ‘go’ and ‘went’. In another bilingual dictionary, this time Arabic- English, the form of the second personal pronoun for the singular=, *انت، انت* and the dual *انتما* and the plural *انتم وانتن* are listed separately. (Bussairi: 86)

He also noticed that, “in some other dictionaries the different word-forms are completely ignored and in many ways others distinction between word-form and vocabulary items is not made.” He saw that, “a vocabulary item (or word) is an abstract entity referred to as lexeme. A lexeme should be given a separate entry. Inflectional and derivation forms should be listed under the basic form (the lexeme) instead of being entered in their alphabetical sequence.” Then he gave a table patterns to explain the solution of this problem of *alphabetization* in compiling dictionaries.

The late professor also noticed another problem with compiling dictionaries in the Arab world. He noticed that, “The tradition of Arabic English dictionaries is to use the infinitive form (e.g to unmarked term) for English as equivalents of the Arabic past or present tense forms.” This as he believed, “is misleading to translators and confusing to the Arab learner of English [as well].”

AlBussairi confirmed one more important factor in compiling dictionaries by quoting (Zgust,1971:312), that the most important step in compiling a bilingual dictionary is to find in the target language such lexemes as are equivalent to the vocabulary items of the source language and to coordinate the two sets.” He sees that some existing dictionaries give a single equivalent and others pile up a group of synonyms in the translation language.” (ibid:88)

This section as it looks has gone through many details more than the other sections in this paper. In fact, I was always fond with the professor’s efforts in his work of compiling dictionaries and encyclopedias. This paper (The Quest for Ideal Bilingual Dictionary) and another paper entitled (Certain Applications of Linguistics to Translation and Lexicography), which was published in (Adab) Journal, issue No. 20 on December 2002-Faculty of Arts, in Khartoum University; in addition to his outstanding book (A Dictionary of Islamic Juristic Terminologies)-these works combined–can stand strongly to support my enthusiasm of praising the efforts of professor Bussairi for his great work in dictionary making.

5. ALBUSAIIRI AS TRANSLATOR

The first time to be introduced to the man was in 2005 when I happened to be with Professor Ibrahim Al-Faki in his office in Wadi Eneel University. The professor was seeking help to translate one of **Jamal Mohammed Ahmed’s** Books, into English, for an international conference, under the care of the International University of Africa. Dr. Al-Faki had recommended me to the professor to co-translate the book in English. But I apologized for leaving the country, as I had already been contracted with Imam Mohamed University in Saudi Arabia. But I told him that, that would have been an honour to me to have my named *entwined* with him in such a great volume. I was happy for the

recommendation by professor Alfaki but much happier for being acquainted with the man who seemed to have recognized my translation skills.

The professor's translation talents are undeniable. In his paper (The Quest for Ideal Bilingual Dictionaries), we can read great ideas about compiling dictionaries that:

The first task of the dictionary maker is the selection of words and their multiple meanings. The main problem concerning multiple meaning or 'polysemy' prevalent in most bilingual dictionaries is that they either give the first meaning only or several meanings but without discriminating between them. The translation of my 'paper' which I am presenting now is 'warga' [in Arabic]. And I am sure that after leaving this room you will talk about (wargat Albussari), Albussairi's paper. You definitely agree with that the translation of 'paper' into 'warga' is a translation mistake. I believe that the first person who translated 'paper' into 'warga' which has become a widely accepted term in Arabic, had been a victim of one of the first compiled English-Arabic dictionary or most probably Arabic-English dictionaries which listed the first meaning or left meaning (an article or essay, esp. read to or written for specialists.)"

So he saw that the best translation for 'paper' could have been translated as (bahth بحث) or (maqalah مقالة) and not 'waraga'.

AlBussairi related his translation experience and skills to his working with the Faculty of Sharai in Kuwait University since 1985, where he was assigned to abstract and translate research papers, published in the Faculty Quarterly into English. He also worked as part-timer translator at the Heritage Revival Department of the international Company (Sakar Computer) in translating Topic Classification of the Noble Hadith (prophetic tradition), where the idea of compiling Islamic dictionary came to his mind for the first time to fill the gap in Islamic lexicography.

He was an eminent translator with great translating skills as he was good at both languages Arabic and English, and with a highly refined and sophisticated background due to being a Sudanese with English education background, an Arab intellectual, an African and a Muslim Scholar, in addition to his education in different environments and his travelling widely in the Arab world, Britain, Europe and some other countries, all over the world, which had all equipped him with practical knowledge of history, geography, languages and people. So his lectures, as most of his students, who I met, used to say they were so entertaining,, enjoyable and informative. His translations as well can show great expertise and craftsmanship knowledge. We can trace this work by giving the following example:

<p>دعاء</p> <p>الدعاء الذي دعا به النبي (صلى الله عليه وسلم) لما لحق به من أهل الطائف.</p> <p>اللهم إليك أشكو ضعف قوتي وقلة حيلتي وهواني على الناس، يا أرحم الراحمين، أنت رب المستضعفين، وأنت ربي، إلى من تكلني إلى بعيد يتجهمني؟ أم إلى عدو ملكته أمري؟ إن لم يكن بك علي غضب فلا أبالي ولكن عافيتك هي أوسع لي، أعوذ بنور وجهك الذي أشرقت له الظلمات، وصلح عليه أمر الدنيا والآخرة من أن تنزل بي غضبك أو يحل علي سخطك، لك العتبى حتى ترضى، ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بك.</p> <p>Invocation</p> <p><i>"O Allah I complain to Thee the weakness of my might, the paucity of my expedient, my disdain by people. Thou art [L]ord of the disdained (people).and Thou art my [L]ord. O Allah? Upon whom do Thou entrust me? Upon a stranger who threatens me or upon and enemy who Thou have given power over me? If Thy curse and (Wrath) are not upon me I do not care, since Thy forgiveness is more ample to me. I seek refuge with the light of Thy Constance which darkness was illuminated by and which the affairs of the present world and the Hereafter were reclaimed, that neither Thy curse will be inflicted on me nor Thy Wrath will befall me. Reproach is Thine till Thou art pleased and there is neither might nor power except in Thee</i></p>

6. CONCLUSION

I was keen to cover the work of AlBussairi in the academic field with some details, especially the area of MA and PhD supervision efforts. I wished to go through some of these theses and dissertations by doing some analytical reading, to see the focus and the interests of the professor in this area. His

efforts covered almost every field in ELT. Most of his students used to talk about his (seriousness) in dealing with the very small details of the research technicalities. He was said to be sometimes so (hard) and (firm) in dealing with every aspect from stating the research problem and methodology of the research to the verifying of the findings. He was always interested in proposals reflecting real problems facing the teachers or the learners of ELT.

So I was so keen to cover this area but I thought that this could be a separate issue as it would need more time to collect and analyse such data. Our man was a towering linguistic figure at both local and regional levels. (May Allah bless him and make his soul rest in peace). His efforts will always remain as great wisdom of an (Africa Sage) as well as signposts and milestones in the history of ELT in our country.

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