

## *Original Paper*

# Transliteration Feasibility as a Means of Communication between Arab Expatriates and Their Progeny Abroad

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### ***Abstract***

*This study is dedicated to exploring and understanding the role of transliteration as a means of remote communication between Arab expatriates and their children in foreign countries. Expatriates need this type of writing communication to communicate with their children for several reasons; especially when the vocal communication is impossible or not available due to technical problems or family and individual privacy. The study tries also to figure out the difference between transliteration and electronic chatting on one hand, and transliteration, translation and creative translation on the other hand. The study is mainly based on a questionnaire professionally and objectively designed and forwarded to a number of Arab expats living in The Netherlands in order to verify the hypothesis made related to the feasibility of transliteration technique and how far it is useful and practical as a remote means of communication between the Arab expatriates and their children due to the lack of proficiency of one of the parties in using the writing system of either language. The study highlights the importance of voice transmission in clarifying the correct pronunciation of words and phrases in a way that is accessible to all around the world beyond being obliged to know the characters of the language from which they are taken. Furthermore, the researcher has scrutinized, studied and analyzed the participants' answers and consequently described them relying on objective and scientific criteria.*

### ***Keywords***

*transliteration, translation, trancreation, chatting, expatriates, MT*

## **1. Introduction**

Many people may depart their homelands and live in countries of alienation for various reasons. Some of these reasons are political, economic, religious, ethnic, and wars. These migrants may face several difficulties, including cultural and social ones. In such dominant foreign societies, it is hypothesized

that some behavior and cultural aspects of the expatriates, especially young children are expected to get affected by the new environment. In addition, one of the variables that may occur is the loss of the mother tongue (first language) by immigrants' children. Therefore, Ada and Zubizarreta (2001, p. 229) assert "when children and their families cannot communicate fully, family values and culture may not develop a crucial sense of belonging and connectedness that comes through family relationships". Although parents use L1 (first language) in the home, their children may not be fluently proficient. "many of the families' .....did in fact choose to use the heritage language at home, and yet still found that their children were losing fluency", said Kondo (1998). Even if the children have some command of the spoken first language (L1) of their parents, they may know nothing about the writing system of that language. Thus, assiduous and keen parents spare no efforts to encourage their children to use the mother language. Parents believe that it is very necessary and important for their children to maintain communication with them and with those who have the same social and cultural heritage by using L1. So, expatriates use various ways to communicate with their children, and transliteration might be one of the most effective ways to maintain communication wherever children are and whenever necessary. It is necessary to tell that the equivalent word in Arabic for **transliteration** is "تفحرة"/naqharah/ of which the majority are not familiar with although they use it regularly. And according to some Arab scholars, in order to know the meaning of "تفحرة", it is no way but to refer it to its triple verb root (verb of 3 letters) "نفح"/naqaha/ or "نقر"/naqara/. Practically, this really is not congenial to what the creator of this Arabic word was driving at. Transliteration is the process of transferring a word from the alphabet of one language to another. It helps people pronounce words and names in foreign languages as well as changing the letters from the word's original alphabet to similar-sounding letters in a different one. The verb **transliterate** consists of **trans-**, which means **across** and **litera-** which means a **letter**. This word is taken from the Latin word **translitteratio**. Transliteration, according to Al Khuli (1982, p. 291), is the process of finding a symmetry between two languages in order to get a mutual letters correspondence and preferably one letter at a time between the spoken and the written one; for example using an Arabic letter and putting it in English language sound and vice versa. Some Arab scholars call transliteration /naqharah/ as a literal transfer process to intermediate between the spoken and the written characters, while some others extremely deny this perspective. Previously, it was called phonetic/phonemic transcription and not **transliteration** because transliteration means transferring the letters of a word as it is written and not as it is spoken; for example the Arabic word **Assalam** represents a phonetic transcription while its transliteration is **Alsalam**, and this also valid for the word **Assalat/Alsalat**. Notwithstanding, there are still some other people who call it the direct way of representing the sounds of one language in the letters of another.

Transliteration, which is still common and broadly used, is different to **chatting** which "refers to the process of communicating, interacting and/or exchanging messages over the internet. It involves two or more individuals that communicate through a chat-enabled service or software" <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/387/chat>. Later on, we will discuss the difference between

transliteration and chatting. According to Wikipedia, the Arab scholar Munir Ba'alabaki is the one who has created the word /naqḥarah/ and later on determined and considered by the Syrian Arabic Language Academy as mentioned in Maref website ([www.maref.org](http://www.maref.org)).

The importance of voice transmission in clarifying the correct pronunciation of words and structures in a way that can be read by everyone in the world without being restricted to know the characters of L1. This means that the reader of the Arabic text, for example, need not to be restricted to know the Arabic letters, but inscribing the vocal text will make it possible for the sender and the receiver to communicate. The transliteration technique is widely used in most dictionaries and glossaries such as Oxford and Cambridge Dictionary to illustrate the correct pronunciation of words and other linguistic structures.

Sometimes, two letters might be used to denote one sound, such as the sound of the Arabic letter, **sheen** (ش), which is written (**sh**) in English. Transliteration is practical and effective in the situations wherein someone doesn't know the writing system of a language, while he speaks and understands that language properly and efficiently. It is believed that transliteration is a sub-field of Machine Translation and evidence suggests that it has existed since the invention of writing and used increasingly with the human progress.

Linguists have tried to put a "phonetic alphabet" using the Roman letters since they are extremely common along with using a number of letters made as well as adding some signs to the letters, but they did not succeed despite their great efforts to have one system/frame for all the vocal types in the known languages (Alzurti, [www.rjgc.gov.jo/Page\\_Images/Books/a.pdf](http://www.rjgc.gov.jo/Page_Images/Books/a.pdf)).

Historically, Egyptians (the Pharaohs) are the ones who invented the use of signs on letters to correspond letters in other languages, but this alphabet was being called "pseudo-alpha" and consisted of 24 shapes used only to write names as well as obtrusive words. Dr. Kheil asserts that transliteration has been used by the colonial administrations of some countries, including Algeria, and he describes it as the process of transmitting the phonetic symbols in writing or written literally from one language to another.

The Roman/Latin language is often used in the process of transliterating entities; such as names, and titles, but they may face some problems due to the absence of the written Arabic phonemic symbols. Some specialists, including Professor Hassan al-Shami, professor of African and Islamic Folklore Studies at Indiana University in the United States of America, prepared a system or a list of Arabic counterpart's characters according to the method of transliteration.

A computer application has also been designed by the Center for the Heritage Cultural Documentation belongs to the Faculty of Arts-South Valley University in Egypt, which works on converting folk-literature texts written in phonetic transcription and diacritics of Arabic letters to their counterparts relying on the Roman letters, a list of Arabic letters and their equivalents submitted by Dr. Al Shami's studies (see annexes), as well as the table of the Arabic Transliteration Index used by the Library of Congress since 1997. The Center has published a list called the Code Application of the Vocal Transfer

of the folk-literature texts along with adding the following points:

- 1) observe the solar letters so that they are not shown in the transliteration,
- 2) observe the non-standard Arabic letter ( ڭ ) which represents the Standard Arabic letter ( ق ) and pronounced like the English letter ( g ), as in **g**ood, while the pronunciation of the standard Arabic letter ( ق ) is similar to ( q ) in English, e.g., the standard Arabic word “قالت” which is written in English phonetic transcription /**qalet**/ is turned to ”ڭالت” and pronounced /**galet**/,
- 3) rendering the Arabic letter “ت”, /t/, which occupies the final position of a word and tied to the previous letter to the /h/ sound (See the annexed Table). Further, the center suggested the following:

- 1) reinforce the application by providing it with the pronunciation rules of the dialects available and used in the Arab World, especially the pronunciation of certain letters,
- 2) convert the audible text directly into a phonetic readable translation without dropping or changing its basic meaning by the Third-Party Application,
- 3) adding the feature of transliteration conversion resulted from the application into audible sound once more through the Text To Speech (TTS) technique.

According to Al Sulaiman (2007), there are three systems of transliteration to convert Arabic letters/sounds to Latin:

- 1) a pure academic system always found in the Encyclopedia of Islam and the work of orientalists. It is old and rooted in the scientific scripts,
- 2) a relatively modified system depending on the English pronunciation, e.g., the Arabic letter “ث” becomes “th”, and this is usually used by the UN as well as some sober non-academic English scripts,
- 3) an academic system classified and based on the sounds of the language transliterated to, e.g., the Arabic letter/sound ( ش ) is transliterated into “sh” in English, and “ch” in French, whereas the diacritic symbol is transliterated into “ou” while the Arabic ( ش ) is transliterated into “sj” and the diacritic symbol into “oe” in Dutch, etc. This system is often used in literature wherein Arabic identities are used, but not in scientific books.

It is very indispensable to bring to the reader’s attention that languages vary in their letters and sounds, and Arabic is not an exception. A language would be ideal if it has one sound for one letter, and Arabic to some scholars is little bit advanced in this respect compared to other languages. Consequently, Arabic language is increasingly becoming effective and important, and one of the evidence is the speech, in Arabic, of Karin Kneissl, the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs in the UN session on 29/09/2018. Moreover, so many international and regional organizations and institutes got interested in transliterating Arabic identities to Roman. Below are some of them:

- 1) the International Conference of orientalists in 1936,
- 2) Hans Wehr Arabic Dictionary,
- 3) the Islamic Ma, aref (knowledge) Office in 1960,
- 4) the International System for Arabic Transliteration (I.S.O.233), Version 1, December 1961,
- 5) Arab Experts Conference held in Beirut 1971 which led for the system to be considered and

recognized by the League of Arab States,

6) the UN in 1972,

7) International Organization for Standardization in 1984,

8) Library of the Congress in America in 1997. This library is distinguished and has so many characteristics, one of them is to assign one Latin letter for one Arabic letter without neglecting any other letter while diacritics or vowel marks (signs accompanying letters) have effect on certain letters that cannot be changed. These vowel marks, which occupy different forms and positions are called “harakat” or “tashkeel”. They are placed either above or under a letter. In Arabic there are two types of vowels: long vowels and short vowels. The method above has treated some other grammatical and phonetic features.

After we have realized and understood the concept of transliteration, it is felt highly necessary to deal with chatting and examine/verify the difference between the two. To chat means to communicate and/or exchange messages over the internet by using computers. This process is achieved by two or more individuals who communicate through a chat-enabled service or software by using the writing tool available on keyboards. Thus, it is different to transliteration which refers to the process of transferring a word from the alphabet of one language to another by using a computer or not. The equivalent Arabic word for **chatting** is “كرشنة” /*kershana*/. It is derived from the word **kershuni** in Syriac language and used to mean writing Arabic in Syriac letters which was renowned in the Seventh Century. Recently, linguists often use the Roman letters for writing Arabic which they believe is more accurate and clear in its conceptual denotation.

## 2. The Difference between Transliteration and Chatting (Kershana)

Both are used as means of communications, but chatting, as mentioned earlier, is used electronically through the internet and computer. Chatting/Kershana is broadly used and has become familiar through using Roman letters and numbers instead of some Arabic letters which are originally not available in the Latin Alphabet. For example, the number 3 is used to refer to the Arabic letter (ع), and if someone wants to write the Arabic word “عربي” /a’arabi/ in English, it will be “3arabi”. Below is a list of some numbers, used in chatting, to indicate the Arabic letters:

2=أ / 3=ع / 3’=غ / 4=ذ / 5=خ / 6=ط / 7=ح / 8=ق / 9=ص / 9’=ض

Usually, this system is widely used by expats and immigrants living abroad, specifically when they have keyboards which are not provided with the Arabic alphabet or when only the above mentioned letters are not available on the keyboards. It has been noticed that young have an extreme tendency to use chatting in their communications by using modern electronic technology, especially when some websites or applications don’t allow to enter an Arabic text or the Arabic text is originally not available. After presenting a brief account about the difference between transliteration and chatting, it is time to discuss the types of transliteration.

### 2.1 Types of Transliteration

When transliteration is used to convert Arabic entities into English, two types of transliterations are available. They are:

1) forward transliteration, and this type is used when the transliterated letter is Arabic. In this case the identities, especially names, take/have different shapes, but all are acceptable since they maintain the original pronunciation. This may happen when transliterating between two languages which are highly different in their phonemic systems, such as English and Arabic. For example, the Arabic name “صلاح الدين” could be written in so many different ways:

**Salah El Deen, Salah Al-Din, Salah Eldin, Salah El Din, Salah Aldin, Salahel Din, Salahelddin, Salahudin, Salahuddin, Salahdin,** and the last one is the most common,

2) backward transliteration, and this type is used when someone tries to transliterate an English identity to Arabic. It is almost common that names/identities take one shape, and this is the difference between the two. For example, “Clinton” is always written so, while in Arabic it may take three forms; **كلينتون**, **كلينتون**, or **كلينتون**.

In order to enrich the study, some samples of transliteration have been taken from Quran.

#### **Al Fatiha:**

- 1) BismiAllahialrrahmanialrraheemi
- 2) Alhamdulillahi rabbi alAAalameena
- 3) Alrrahmanialrraheemi
- 4) Maliki yawmialddeeni
- 5) IyyaknaAAabuduwa-iiyyakanastaAAeenu
- 6) Ihdinaalssirataalmustaqeema
- 7) SirataallatheenaanAAamtaAAalayhimghayrialmaghdoobiAAalayhimwala alddalleena.

#### **Al Nasr:**

- 1) IthajaanasruAllahiwaalfathu
- 2) Waraaytaalnnasayadkhuloona fee deeniAllahiafwajan
- 3) Fasabbihbihamdirabbikawaistaghfirhuinnahu kana tawwab.

These examples are retrieved from the website esin Islam:

([www.esinislam.com/Quran\\_And\\_Hadith/Latin\\_Transliteration\\_of\\_Quran/Latin\\_Transliteration\\_of\\_Quran\\_Surah\\_1.htm](http://www.esinislam.com/Quran_And_Hadith/Latin_Transliteration_of_Quran/Latin_Transliteration_of_Quran_Surah_1.htm))

### 3. The Rules of Transliterating Arabic Letters into Latin

- 1) The solar and lunar definite article (ال) are treated as one and having the form of-al,
- 2) neglect the intensity glyph, germination, put on the (ي) /ja/ for doubling the letter and called “shaddah” (ّ) in Arabic when using transliteration, e.g., the word “مدرسية” is transliterated as “madrasiyah” and not “madrasiyya”, but some people don’t adhere to this rule,

- 3) if the letter “ا” /alif/ has no hamzah, which indicates a glottal stop, and preceded by the glyph fatha (َ) usually assigned by (a), this fatha is dropped,
- 4) if the non-vowel, (و) sukūn, “wāw” is preceded by (ُ) ḍammah (u), this (ُ) ḍammah (u) is dropped in transliteration,
- 5) if the non-vowel, (س) sukun, (ج) /ja/ has the diacritic mark “kasrah”, this mark must be dropped in transliteration,
- 6) all alien words have to be treated as Arabic words and not to be rendered to its origin.

The above mentioned Arabic signs and symbols (glyphs) are called diacritic marks, which are equivalent to the vowel sounds in English. After providing this account about how important transliteration is, it is time to discuss the difference between translation and transliteration.

#### 4. The Differences between Translation and Transliteration

We have already defined transliteration saying it is a translation generating process by using the original phonetic utterance of a word and make it realized through the letters and symbols of the language transliterated to. In the sense, it is the process of transferring a text of a language (L1) into the alphabet of another (L2) without changing the original meaning, but preserving its original pronunciation, while the lexical meaning of translation is the process of changing something written, spoken or referred to from one language into another. The first language is called the source language (L1) and the second is called the target language (L2). Examining the above lines, the reader can easily realize the main difference between transliteration, which is the alternative tool to read a text by using another alphabet, and translation. According to Crystal (1991, p. 346), translation is the process wherein the meaning of the linguistic terms of L1 harmonizes and chimes with the meaning in L2 whether the text is spoken, written or signed. Halai (2007) confirms that when transferring a text from L1 into L2, this text has to maintain its sociocultural context. Torop (2002) argues that translation is the process of converting ideas from one language into another, including the linguistic, social and cultural context, while translation merely replaces or completes the words and meanings of a language with meanings of another language, specifically when the exact equivalents are not available in the target language. For example, international brands, distinguished identities, programs, and electronic and technological applications are all transliterated by making the sound types of L1 and L2 approximate, such McDonald, Burger King, Gucci, City center, New Fashion, Skype, Blue tooth, Fire Fox, etc. In line with this, some Arabic identities (proper names) cannot be translated, such as “Zahraa” and “Faris”. To translate these names, the former will be “flower” which has nothing to do with the name “Zahraa”, and the latter is “knight”, likewise. Therefore, names of identities, which are difficult to be translated and not available in the dictionaries, especially the contemporary and recent ones, such proper nouns, companies, international brands, etc., are always transliterated.

It necessary to tell that not only translation which faces such difficulties, but transliteration as well, specifically when transliterating from English to Arabic due to not being possible for transliteration to

do its job properly in specifying the exact pronunciation of a transliterated word from English to Arabic. This is because some letters could be pronounced in more than one way, e.g., the letter (a) in the words: cat /æ/, take /ei/, fall /ɔ/, about /ə/, car /a:/. All this happens because of the phonetic environment wherein the letter (a) exists and being responsible for the phonetic variations in English. Thus, the successful transliteration must take in consideration all potentialities when cutting phonetic units (phonemes). The important aspect of using transliteration is to avoid the loss of meaning that often results in daily linguistic communication through the use of translation and helps to identify the context in which cross-cultural translation can be better understood. While words and phrases in L1 are translated and then arranged to form interrelated sentences in L2, transliteration does not have a word reordering situation.

Nida and Taber (1969, p. 13) confirm that transliteration has the priority and highly required compared to translation because in some cases it is difficult for the translation to find the exact counterpart or equivalent meaning beyond the comparative one. They add “If one is to insist that translation must involve no loss of information whatsoever, then obviously not only translating but all communication is impossible”. Consequently and to achieve the task properly as required, some signs (glyphs) and sound symbols are often used and placed between brackets to give the closest meaning or placed in the margins with some clarifications.

Although transliteration process is easier than translation in many ways, it inevitably faces some particular challenges. Usually, translators/interpreters transliterate words in a way based on their spelling in L1 and not as they are pronounced, for example, the English noun “Graham” is transliterated into Arabic as (غراهام) while its real pronunciation is “Gram” (غرام). Therefore, its easy definition contradicts its challenges. It is a fact that each language has its own alphabet and spelling style which usually meshes its sounds and phonemic system. But, due to the peculiarities of some languages, the issue of probability is clear and fundamental. In some cases, it is very difficult to find accurate or exact linguistic counterparts or equivalents for foreign entities in L2, which makes the translator choose a particular word or structure in order to make the speaker capable to pronounce the name of that foreign entity after modification to putting it in its proper phonetic aspect close to the origin in L1.

In order to enrich the study, it has been determined to display some samples of transliteration used in Asia. For example, when Japanese try to transliterate an English identity/name, they use the Japanese alphabet along with the way it is pronounced in their language. The noun “actinium” is cut as follows: a/c/ti/ni/u/m, and transliterated to Japanese to become a/ku/chi/ni/u/mu/ because the origin of this word in Japanese is “a ku chi ni mu”. This act reflects a type of difficulty as well as complexity because the main objective is to know how the name is pronounced in L1 and not L2.

Translation and transliteration may face some similar problems since ideas, concepts and feelings cannot be sometimes translated from one language to another in the form required. Generally speaking, the most crucial shortcomings of translation is to be intensive and time consuming, while basically it

should be a process of copying and translating every single item in the original document by finding semantic equivalents between two different languages.

### 5. Terms of Accurate Translation

Translation is considered the best prosperous tool for research across cultures. In order to accomplish the task of translation accurately, especially in the scientific and academic research, it is pretty important and necessary for a translator to be well-experienced and knowledgeable about sociolinguistic contexts in which identities and linguistic structures are used.

Green and Coulson (1995) in a study related to scientific research assure that the best way to ensure translation accuracy is to use more than one person to do the translation task. For example, in case of translating scientific research texts, an individual other than the researcher must do the task of translation and the researcher does the task of reviewing and editing to ensure that the translation and the original texts are alike. Emmel (1998) and Johns et al. (2001) highly agrees with this perspective. They believe it is indispensable to use at least two persons who know about linguistics in addition to the researcher to do the task of translating qualitative scientific research from L1 to L2. This process is called “forward translation”. In the same time, another bilingual individual/translator does the task of translating documents or texts from L2 to L1, and this process is called “backward translation”. Eventually, the two texts are compared in order to ensure the translation accuracy as well as linguistic equivalents. Any discrepancy between the two translations is subject to discussion between these two translators. Beaton et al. (2002), US Census Bureau (2001) and Weeks et al. (2007) suggested some terms to be followed in doing the translation process. They are as follows:

1. specify or decide the text as well as the context suitability,
2. use research tools in the so-called “forward translation”,
3. specify/decide whether it is a “backward translation”,
4. check/examine the translated meaning in both languages; L1 and L2,
5. review and revise the entire process of translation in order to get identical interpretations.

In order to ensure the content suitability, Flaherty et al. (1998) suggested a standard approach of four points to be followed:

1. semantically (similar meanings),
2. technical (method of data gathering is comparable; to be compared),
3. criterion (expressions and structures match and harmonize cultural criteria and conventions),
4. concept similarity (also called cultural similarity; in the sense, having the same semantic denotation and suitability in two different cultures).

Halai (2007), in his turn, suggested the following specific strategy for both transliteration and translation:

1. the translator must be ascertained whether there is a linguistic equivalent in L2 for transliterated or translated identities from L1,

2. quotations must be used when equivalent counterparts are not available or due to the difficult translation of some identities of L1.

## 6. Translation and Transcreation

In the above lines, we tried to present a brief account about translation as a means to convert what is said or written in one language into another, while transcreation is a term used mainly by advertising and marketing promotion to refer to the process of adapting a message from one language to another, meanwhile maintaining its intent, style, tone, and context (Wikipedia). “Transcreation” means “translating” and “recreating” the original text in a new language whilst making sure it is still appropriate in the context for which it is intended”. The term transcreation is a compound word original consists of two simple words “translation + creation”. This word has long been used, as above mentioned, in the advertisement operations as well as commercial and marketing promotion. It converts the meaning of the message from the source language into the target language without losing the original meaning intended in the source language.

In some cases, the brand is not simply to be translated when it is intended to be used or promoted in countries other than the country of origin. It uses the creative translation method chosen to publish or promote the product globally. This translation is done when working with marketing teams. For example, there is a title of an advertisement written in American English and is intended to export the same announcement to Britain, it is converted into British English while maintaining the image, significance, style and context, and vice versa. But, transcreation is basically used between two different languages. In such a case, the translation must go beyond its familiar context because the creative translation by its nature takes a certain concept in a language and re-creates it creatively and fully in order to fit the local audience who the text is presented to and to understand it as it is in its source language. When transcreation is in practice, translation should be forgotten. To elaborate, take this example; just imagine you are an employee of a certain company, and this company has a product or service for which commercial marking and promotion is required, and you are in charge of making an innovative text for this product/service which make the public accept and believe the announcement. In the sense, you have to impress and get them fascinated by encouraging them to get convinced of the concepts you have presented. This act is called creative writing or translation. Thus, transcreation changes a text to be culturally appropriate for the foreign market taking into account the few concealed bits in which the normal translation can slip.

Transcreation is used to avoid literal translation that may lead to misunderstanding or may indicate unacceptable things, e.g., when the American “Braniff Airways” published its promotional announcement to address its customers of Spanish background in 1987, it didn’t mean to offend or insult them, but just to make a promotion to the company and its flights. The title of the announcement was “fly in leather” which meant to display a great and luxurious experiment, but unfortunately the literal translation in Spanish language is “vuela en cuero” which means “fly naked”, and all of that is

because the last part of the Spanish phrase “en cuero” (in leather) looks almost like “en cueros” which means “naked” in English. In such cases, transcreation has to be used instead of normal translation. Transcreation needs more time and money compared to translating a certain document word for word. Since transcreation means translating and recreating the spirit of the original text in another language, it is extremely necessary to make sure that the text is still relevant to achieve its objective/purpose through maintaining the context and content for which it has been designed. Therefore, the person doing this task must understand the required outcome entirely, and, in the same time, can also be free in making necessary changes and not only to adhere to the task of translating the original text.

### **7. The Difference between Translation and Transcreation**

There are six ways to distinguish between regular translation and transcreation. Therefore, it is important to know and decide whether regular translation or transcreation is needed. These methods are:

1. it is familiar that the specialists in transcreation are authors. They are usually known as copywriters providing services in other languages, but generally speaking, there are two different types of services. These authors do not necessarily have to be part of the organization or the network group,
2. transcreation often begins with a brief innovative/creative text. It is unlike traditional translation, which usually begins with an original text. Transcreation begins with a creative short text similar to other creative projects in the native language, rather than providing a text and forward it to an individual to translate it creatively. The person doing transcreation is an author who does the whole task by himself and not like a mere translator. Therefore, what is needed is to provide clear ideas for creative concepts that embody the advertisement,
3. transcreation is usually paid on the basis of hourly calculation, while the payment for translation process is based on the number of words. Transcreation is similar to any other creative service such as writing, calligraphy, design and video production,
4. transcreation produces a new message that matches the target environment while regular translation produces new words in another language, while maintaining the same message,
5. transcreation focuses on the creative marketing copy. The usual translation is entirely good for a restricted useful text, but when the text is mainly designed to stimulate the reader (customer), the marketing text is required and in this case transcreation is the most appropriate rather than usual translation,
6. transcreation involves advice related to appearance and feeling; in the sense, transcreation providers often advise customers on the appearance and shape of creative assets to ensure acceptance and resonance in local markets.

In spite of all the points above mentioned, transcreation faces great and unique challenges. When a company tries to provide its brand, it must be realistic and honest through the image it offers. It must adapt its message to have greater resonance and impact on the public individually or collectively.

Successful examples of creative translation are Coca-Cola and Red Bull. These two giant companies are not only to translate their campaigns and their advertisements creatively, but they put it in a creative style that is more suitable for the public all over the world.

It should be noted that some of the lexical complexities of linguistic items may lead to comic and funny results when read by someone, especially the customer. For example, General Motors lost millions of dollars after misunderstanding the Spanish word “Nova”, which originally made up of two parts, “No+va”, which means “It will not go” in English in its campaign to promote its car “Cheva Nova” in South America. Who buys a car that doesn’t go? The company did not realize this mistake until it promoted for the announcement. Consequently, the company lost millions of dollars. This is one of the sociocultural mistakes. This fatal mistake led the company to change the name of the brand and made it “Chevrolet Chevy” after knowing that no one buys a car that doesn’t go.

### **8. Transcreation and Automatic (Machine) Translation**

Dr. Al Suleiman asserts that we use transliteration technique when all other translation techniques cannot do their task properly to achieve the required objective. In the sense, when there is no functional or phonetic equivalent for a linguistic term in L2 or cannot be explained or deleted from the original text when translation is in progress. Translators do not resort to the technique of transliteration until they have exhausted all the techniques and possibilities available as well as verifying the linguistic ammunition of L2. Dr. Al-Suleiman considers the use of transliteration is a point of deficiency more than being an appropriate solution to overcome the problems of translation, and makes it similar to cauterization which is always the last remedy in the procedure.

Automatic/Machine translation is one of the modern means of electronic translation. It is defined as the process of translating text through computers and other electronic devices without human intervention. Some call it immediate or instant translation and sometimes referred to as “MT”. It is usually accomplished by a simple substitution of words of a language into another. It is also described as a computer-generated process and professionally called Natural Language Processing (NLP), which uses dual language data as well as other language sources to construct language and phraseological forms used in text translation. Machine translation is one of the areas of natural language processing (NLP) and IT field.

Orhun et al. (2012) believe that the main objective of automated translation systems is to find the best translation without any human interference. It is easy to detect the obvious difficulties facing automatic translation at a time transliteration seems easy and accurate. Here, some people may wonder why transliteration a sub-field of NLP is. In the process of automatic translation, the system used should deal with several difficult topics, including the process of meaning ambiguity and rearrangement of the context of the sentence, etc.

There are many people worldwide who speak different languages. This has made automatic translation one of the most useful and important means for doing research in the field of Natural Language

Processing (NLP). According to Culyy and Riehemann (2003), Google machine continuously adds new languages to the system, with an ongoing process of improving language translation through the creation, preparing and training of software by providing it with additional texts to overcome poor translation. Although researchers emphasize that the automatic translation performance has never reached the level of human experience in translation, it is a quick and cheap translation tool. Memories

### **9. Reliability and Accuracy of Automatic Translation**

Although there are several systems and techniques for automatic translation, Panineni et al. (2002) believe that “BLUE” (Bilingual Evaluation Understanding) may be the best to accomplish automatic translation according to some studies through quality assessment, whereas Aiken et al. (2005) assure that Google Translation (GT) is the most efficient and accurate after comparing four translation systems. Several studies have attempted to verify the accuracy of GT, but there has been no published comprehensive analysis and assessment showing its accuracy.

In general, although GT is not suitable for all situations, it is broadly used by many groups of translators to help them to achieve their tasks due to the nature of the rapid translation facility for foreign texts, especially those that rely on computer and cannot understand. Therefore, machine translation is also in practice and used by translators to prepare drafts because of its speed.

Really, there are no various comprehensive studies to verify the accuracy of GT, in spite of its huge use. We have already mentioned that automatic translation programs have not been created to replace human translation because the text translated by electronic systems and software needs to be revised and reviewed. This passive indication confirms the inaccuracy of machine translation.

One of the problems and challenges facing automatic translation is being unable to provide accurate translations of words that have multiple meanings and are used in several ways in the same context of translation. For example, the word “run” can refer to “ripping in a women’s stockings, running (n./run (v.) (act or spell of running), running a company/program, occupy a position, round, a range, or a stroke of luck. The same is true in Arabic. For example, the Arabic verb “وقف” /waqafa/ may mean “stood up”, learnt about a question/issue or realized and understood that the issue has doubts. This is also valid for Arabic verbs of the same letters but express different meanings after taking glyphs (diacritics), and this would be a serious challenge for machine translation (MT) due to the lack of linguistic equivalents in L2. This indeed is common among vital languages when MT cannot distinguish words accompanied with diacritics, and consequently may provide improper translation. For example, the Arabic word “ملح” can donate different meanings; it could be “salt” /milih/ or “urgent” /mulih/ in English. Since these two words differ only in their vowel sounds (glyphs), it must be these vowels that elicit the two meanings. These vowels, then, are phonesthemes. But anyway, the context as well as the situation is still responsible to determine the lexical meaning. The best way to avoid this problem is to use clear and accurate words beyond using metaphors, similes, paronomasia and comparisons. Colloquial and buzzwords should be also avoided as well as words that rely entirely

on the sociocultural background unless they are important and necessary to the text.

Machine translation and human translation do not depend on each other and do not replace each other. Sometimes, a person uses automatic translation and then goes to a professional translator to get the exact translation required. This is a negative indicator of the accuracy of the machine translation. In spite of all the negative indications of automated translation, Google statistics assures that more than 500 million people use the free online translation service at the average of 100 billion words a day. Furthermore, despite the progress made by GT, these programs remain limited and cannot replace human translation, according to Casacuberta et al. (2009:135). They also add that the quality of MT by such systems is less in level compared to human translation. No one can entirely rely on these machines and programs. No one can take advantage of the translation provided by these machines and programs, even if they are very sophisticated without submitting them to human revision and review. Huang (2011:2) agrees with Casacuberta and says after two decades of research and development supported by the best and fastest computers, automatic translation stays available to all users through the Internet, although it is not accurate at present.

Finally, in a study by Karen Schairer (1996), she found that automatic translation was not rated as successful. She added that even after the review it is still less efficient than the translation from the source or original document. For her, the human translator can translate a sentence in a faster and more successful way beyond the help of automatic translation.

## **10. The Questionnaire**

### *10.1 Description of the Questionnaire*

Generally speaking, a questionnaire is a means or method that is usually used to collect information or data from the participants to check and know their ideas and perspectives. The questionnaire is used in different fields of studies and has two forms. The first is in the form of written or spoken questions and the second takes the form of personal interview. Generally, this questionnaire is used to accomplish different purposes. In addition, a questionnaire can be achieved through printed questions, telephone, e-mail or the Internet. The questionnaire is usually comprises a set of questions designed and arranged to verify the participants' views on a particular topic. Questionnaires regularly and mainly use closed-ended question system. In the sense, it is one word answer, either yes or no, in order to focus, specify and identify the answers of the participants. There are two methods to accomplish a questionnaire:

**A-** The qualitative method: this method is unique and pioneering in providing extensive and detailed information and explanations.

**B-** The quantitative method: this method provides complete, accurate and detailed information based on the collection of statistical and numerical data. The type of the questionnaire used in this study is the first one, and it consists of 10 closed-ended questions, while the number of the participants is 10 of both genders.

In order to eliminate and avoid misunderstanding, respondents received clear and accurate explanations to the questionnaire content as well as the response method, and simultaneously they were asked to give specific answers to maintain the objectivity of the questionnaire. They were also asked whether they knew the word “تفحرة” (transliteration) and what it means or not. It was a surprise that the majority use it without knowing this word or its meaning since it is a standard word mainly used in the academic/professional circles. The reader will note their answers when we analyze them later. Thus, the researcher gave them a detailed explanation of transliteration as well as its meaning. The principal important question that was presented to the participants and is essential for the study, is whether they are using transliteration or not to communicate with their children.

#### *10.2 Criteria for Selecting Participants in the Questionnaire*

The researcher was careful and accurate in selecting the participants in the questionnaire. They were Arabs from different nationalities of common linguistic, cultural and social backgrounds to avoid factors that might affect the objectivity and results of the questionnaire. All respondents are based in the Netherlands. The participants were enthusiastic and willing to carry out their task objectively. They were interviewed individually, some of whom do not know each other. In order to maintain the objectivity and accuracy of their answers, there was no time limit, but rather sufficient time for an answer. Before they give their answers, the researcher encouraged them to ask any question that concerns them about the questionnaire in particular and the study in general.

#### *10.3 Objectives of the Questionnaire*

The main objective of the questionnaire is to obtain accurate and objective information from the Arab expatriates participating in the questionnaire and to ascertain whether they use transliteration or not as a means of communicating with their children. Through their answers and in a statistical and analytical way, the researcher will know the feasibility and success of transliteration and its importance as a means of communication between Arab expatriates and their children. This study may lead the researcher and others to carry out further studies in future to know the role, scope and importance of transliteration globally, like chatting which is widely used, as a means of communication.

#### *10.4 Analyzing and Describing the Respondents' Answers*

A glance at the respondents' answers reflects their compatibility with one common answer to most of the questionnaire items. As for the first question of the questionnaire, the answer was 100% **YES**. This also applies to the second question, which was **YES** with the same percentage of the first question. The answers to the third question were all **NO** and got the percentage of 100%. This shows that the expatriates' children did not have the opportunity to develop the skills of reading and writing in Arabic due to not being exposed to these skills. The answers to the fourth question were various as two participants answered **YES** and the rest answered **NO**. This indicates a percentage of 80% of those who do not speak the language of the country of residence efficiently. This, indeed, reflects that the parents are not completely immersed in the culture of the country of residence as well as the weakness of their social connection or communication with the surrounding environment due to their sense of not being

able to communicate and express their thoughts and feelings properly in the language of the country of residence. This is one of the reasons that may lead them to use transliteration to communicate with their children in distance. To overcome this embarrassment, some of them are reluctant to communicate and engage with others, unlike their children, who have the opportunity to communicate and interact socially through work, school or youth activities. The rest, after being asked, answered that the language of their country of residence is good but sometimes they face difficulties in the level of vocabulary as well as morphological and grammatical structures because of the nature of the language of the country of residence. Regarding the fifth question, the answer was unanimously **NO**, and this really proves the hypothesis made. This marks 100%. Likewise, 100% is the percentage of the answers to the sixth question whether the children speak, read and write the language of the country of residence. They all said **YES**. This result is normal and expected because they studied there and got deeply involved in the society from the early time of their childhood. According to the research and principles of educational psychology, children can acquire more than one language at a time. All the respondents answered with **YES** to question #7, which indicates a percentage of 100%.

It has been made certain that parents often speak Arabic in their conversations with their children. This, in fact, is a positive point for expatriates, but the shortcoming is they did not create opportunities for the children to develop their literacy skills in their first language. This indicates that the parents of these children are keen to preserve their L1 which is part of their sociocultural background. The answers to the eighth question was “sometimes”, and this indicates the parents’ inability in using the language of the country of residence as a single tool to communicate with their children. The answers to question 9, which is the focus of the study in the use of transliteration technology as a means of remote communication between parents and their children, were **YES**. This represents 100%. These answers confirm and support the objectivity and hypothesis of the study. Finally, by answering with “**YES**” to question 10, the participants agreed that transliteration technology is useful, important and common in remote communications.

## **11. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study has found that Arab expatriates use transliteration in their communication with their children remotely. They use it mainly when there is a difficulty or hindering in a vocal communication due to technical reasons or family privacy. The participants’ answers to the questionnaire have proved that transliteration is important, effective and useful as a means of communication and meet their needs. It has also found that Arab expatriates are keen to use their first language in their verbal dialogues with their children, but unfortunately they did not have the opportunity to develop their children’s literacy skills.

The study has discovered that transliteration technique is important not only in the expatriate dialogues, but also common and globally used. Unfortunately, it sometimes faces difficulties and accordingly cannot do its job properly in determining the exact pronunciation of an English word to be

transliterated to Arabic, because some letters are pronounced in various ways due to the phonetic environment, surrounded by other letters, in which they exist and responsible for changing the phonetic context.

Transliteration is often replaces translation, and translators often use the first when the second is unable to perform its function properly in finding the exact linguistic equivalent verbally or functionally. In comparison to translation, transliteration is easier and used by translators in transliterating certain entities (names), according to their spelling and not pronunciation in the source language, when translation is unable to do this job, like the name “Graham” which is pronounced “Gram”. However, some believe that the use of transliteration is a sign of disability, but it has not been clearly and accurately demonstrated whether the deficit is in the target language translation because there is no functional or verbal equivalent or in the translator. The study has also concluded that transliteration technique is a branch of Machine Translation, which is one of the fields of Information Technology that no matter how far it is developed and its performance improved, it does not reach human level expertise in translation.

Machine Translation is not originally created to replace human translation. In spite of all the rapid progress, development and universally used, it is still unsuitable for all situations. In order to maintain accuracy, the text translated by Google Machine Translation or other automated translation software needs to be reviewed. This is a negative indication refers to the inaccuracy of these electronic programs. Thus, machine translation will remain unreliable, sometimes, because of the loss of the spirit of the text and the inability to provide or complete accurate translation, especially if there is a word that carries more than one meaning and used in several ways in the same context of translation.

Finally, the study has arrived at the fact that transcreation has its own contexts and differs greatly from ordinary translation as it attempts to adapt the original text or message taken from the source language, and preserves its meanings, style, tone and context. However, ordinary translation is the process of changing something written or spoken to another language. The researcher believes that this study would be a brick or ground as well as the basis for broader and comprehensive studies dealing with the importance of transliteration and its great role in the studies of sociolinguistics and explore the secrets of the ordinary translation and transcreation along with their development.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. The questionnaire

1. Do you speak Arabic fluently and write it efficiently?
2. Do your children speak Arabic?
3. Do your children speak and write Arabic?
4. Do you speak the language of the country of residence excellently?
5. Do you master the target language reading and writing skills of the country of residence?
6. Do your children speak and write the language of the country of residence excellently?
7. Do you often use your mother tongue when communicating with your children?
8. Do you use the language of the country of residence in daily conversations with your children? If yes, always or sometimes?
9. Do you use transliteration technique for remote communication with your children?
10. Do you believe that transliteration is an important and useful means of communication?

### Appendix 2.

Name of letter	Symbol	Transliteration
hamzah	ء	‘
baa’	ب	b
taa’	ت	t
thaa’	ث	th
jeem	ج	j
haa’	ح	<u>h</u>

<b>khaa'</b>	خ	<b>kh</b>
<b>daal</b>	د	<b>d</b>
<b>dhaal</b>	ذ	<b>dh</b>
<b>raa'</b>	ر	<b>r</b>
<b>zaa'</b>	ز	<b>z</b>
<b>seen</b>	س	<b>s</b>
<b>sheen</b>	ش	<b>sh</b>
<b>saad</b>	ص	<b>s</b>
<b>daad</b>	د	<b>d</b>
<b>taa'</b>	ت	<b>t</b>
<b>zaa'</b>	ظ	<b>z</b>
<b>'ayn</b>	ع	<b>'</b>
<b>ghayn/ghain</b>	غ	<b>gh</b>
<b>faa'</b>	ف	<b>f</b>
<b>qaaf</b>	ق	<b>q</b>
<b>kaaf</b>	ك	<b>k</b>
<b>laam</b>	ل	<b>l</b>
<b>meem</b>	م	<b>m</b>
<b>noon</b>	ن	<b>n</b>
<b>haa'</b>	ه	<b>h</b>
<b>waaw</b>	و	<b>w</b>
<b>yaa'</b>	ي	<b>y</b>

*Note.* In addition to the above table, there are some other diacritics, similar to English vowels, used and can change meaning. They are:

<b>fathah (a)</b>	<b>kasrah (i)</b>	<b>dammah (u)</b>	<b>alif (ā)</b>	<b>yaa' (ī)</b>	<b>waaw (ū)</b>
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## Appendix 3.

scientific transcription / transcription savante					
consonants / consonnes					
‘	ء	r	ر	f	ف
ā	ا	z	ز	q	ق
b	ب	s	س	k	ك
t	ت	š	ش	l	ل
ṭ	ث	ṣ	ص	m	م
ġ	ج	ḍ	ض	n	ن
ḥ	ح	ṭ	ط	h	ه
ḫ	خ	ẓ	ظ	w	و
d	د	‘	ع	y	ي
ḍ	ذ	ġ	غ		
others / autres					
short vowels : a, i, u / short vowels : ā, ī, ū					
				ġ	ة

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