



Volume 2, Issue 1 – Serial Number 5  
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# TTAIS

## International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies

**An Analytical Examination of English Translations of Idioms in Selected Verses of Surah Al-Ma'idah and Surah Al-Isra Based on Schleiermacher's Framework**  
Mohammad Yazdani; Mahsa Raeisi Sattari

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**Comparing Human and ChatGPT 3.5 Translation Strategies for Hidden Proverbs in the Qur'an**  
Fatemeh Rajabi Fakhrabadi; Ebrahim Davoudi Sharifabad

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International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies (TTAIS) is a double blind peer reviewed electronic quarterly publication concerned with appropriate aspects of Islamic terminology. TTAIS is an open access publication, which publishes of original research papers, review papers, case reports, and short communications across the fields of Islamic terminology.

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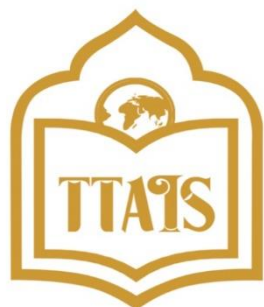
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- Discourse analysis and Islamic studies;
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- Methodology of translating Islamic texts and terms;
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## An Analytical Examination of English Translations of Idioms in Selected Verses of Surah Al-Ma'idah and Surah Al-Isra Based on Schleiermacher's Framework

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### ABSTRACT

The language of the Qur'an is highly eloquent and rich in rhetoric. Transferring features of languages from different origins is tricky. Although throughout history, scholars have made significant contributions to understanding Qur'anic idioms, we still face challenges in conveying their meanings. There are language-specific idioms in Qur'anic Arabic, reflecting Arab culture and environment. The fact that different cultures conceptualize reality in varying ways causes idioms to be shaped by cultural factors. This is why some translations of Qur'anic idioms fail to convey their full depth of meaning. This article aims to investigate various interpretations and English translations of the idioms in the selected verses of Surahs Al-Isra and Al-Ma'idah. To this end, the translations of twelve prominent translators were compared. Considering the descriptive nature of the work, the researchers analyzed the methods used by the selected translators. The theoretical framework underpinning this study is the translation methods of Schleiermacher. Furthermore, the translations were analyzed and ranked based on Waddington's holistic model of translation quality assessment. Analysis reveals a spectrum of translational strategies, defying strict categorization within Schleiermacher's binary framework of 'naturalizing' and 'alienating' translation. A significant number of translations exhibit hybrid characteristics, displaying a preponderance towards either naturalization or alienation, yet failing to conform exclusively to either pole.

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## 1. Introduction

Often called the ‘Mother of Scriptures’ or the ‘Source of the Scriptures,’ the Holy Qur’ān is more than just a collection of religious prescriptions. Its text is an integral part of every prayer and act of worship for Muslims, and it is recited endlessly in all religious settings (Khaleghian, 2014, p. 59). Faiq states that the discourse of the Holy Qur’ān is a linguistic context characterized by syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, phonetic, and cultural features that distinguish it from other types of Arabic discourse. These features of the Holy Qur’ān have posed significant challenges for translators and translation theories (Faiq, 2004, p. 92). In other words, there are two types of Arabic: non-Qur’ānic Arabic and Qur’ānic Arabic. The Qur’ān has three main characteristics that have made it a holy book and distinct from other divine books:

- All the words and phrases of the Qur’ān are the words of God, stated by Him; for this reason, reading this book is considered an act of pure servitude and a means of drawing closer to Him.
- The Qur’ān is the book of guidance for all human beings, leading us to the straight path.
- The Qur’ān stands as Islam’s eternal miracle, validating the prophethood of the final Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family).

However, we live in an era of globalization, where modern communication technology helps cultures around the world become more connected and accessible. Therefore, writers need to address a universal audience with universal features. This is what makes texts translatable across different languages and cultures. One reason for the difficulty in translating the Qur’ān is the presence of rhetorical styles in the source language (SL), which prevent the translator from fully capturing the rhetorical components and thus lead to confusion. For this reason, idioms should be studied in terms of their ideological, semantic, rhetorical, and cultural components, as omitting any of these aspects results in further ambiguity. Idioms are an important part of cultural heritage; they not only carry the information they express but also convey a pleasant impression. A good idiom often gives rise to endless associations of ideas and encourages readers to think deeply about the spirit it contains (Abdelaziz, 2018, pp. 146-147). Due to differences in customs, geography, history, religion, beliefs, etc., translating idioms involves conveying the characteristics of a particular speech community. Idioms serve as a powerful communicative tool. They are used in language to convey maximum meaning with a minimum of words. Language chunks like idioms aid fluency, making the language sound natural (Abdelaziz, 2018, pp. 137-138).

Pickthall stresses that the English translation of the Qur’ān “is not the Glorious Qur’ān, that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy. It is only an attempt to present the meaning of the Qur’ān — and peradventure something of the charm in English. It can never take the place of the Qur’ān in Arabic, nor is it meant to do so” (Pickthall, 1999, Index, vii). Arberry (1973) stated that the Qur’ān is neither purely prose nor poetry; it uniquely blends elements of both. Consequently, a translator cannot replicate its form, as it is exclusive to the Qur’ān, combining features of prose and poetry while skillfully utilizing the nuances of the original language. Furthermore, the Qur’ān’s form is intricately intertwined with its content, making it impossible for form-focused or content-focused translations to fully capture its essence in either aspect (p. 134).

This work investigates the approaches proposed by Schleiermacher in the 17 translations of the selected Qur'ānic idiom and ranks them according to their ability to convey meaning, based on Waddington's holistic model. It finally offers two different translations of this Qur'ānic idiom that are fluent, clear, and understandable for the younger generation.

## 2. A review of the related works

Various studies have been conducted concerning Qur'ānic figures of speech, covering different aspects of this issue. Zolfaghari (2008) defined *Kināya* and explained the difference between *Kināya*, *Ḍarb al-Mathal*, *Metonymy*, and *Metaphor*. He provided the readers with criteria to distinguish between these figures of speech. Koorani (2012) investigated the strategies applied by Iranian lexicographers when translating proverbs and identified which strategy was most frequently used in bilingual English-Persian dictionaries, including *Millennium* and *Pooya*.

Badrani (2013) investigated the translation of *Asa* in the Glorious Qur'ān into English. He shows how translators have rendered it and, based on the accredited Qur'ānic interpretations, corrects the translations of the selected verses. Khaleghian (2014) investigated the possibility of transferring the sound devices of the Holy Qur'ān into English poetic and non-poetic translations. She limited the work to the sound devices of chapter 30 of the Holy Qur'ān. She selected three types of translations of the Holy Qur'ān: poetic translation, stylistic translation, and explanatory translation, done by Nikayin, Arberry, and Yusuf Ali, respectively. Aldahesh (2014), in his work (*Un*)*Translatability of the Qur'ān: A Theoretical Perspective*, provided a general overview of untranslatability as a key concept in the realm of translation studies and discussed, in detail, the question of the Qur'ān's untranslatability. Nasiri (2014) analyzed 16 Qur'ānic verses that contain *Kināya*. He also described the functions of this figure of speech in the Qur'ān.

Heidarzade (2016) studied fifty Qur'ānic proverbs and the rhetorical devices used in each proverb. Abdelaziz (2018) focuses mainly on the translation of Arabic idioms and proverbs into French, providing insight into the cross-cultural and cognitive linguistic processes of translation. He also examines the strategies used in translating idioms and proverbs from the novels of Tahar Wattar: *The Fisherman and the Palace*, *The Ace*, *The Earthquake*, and *A Mule's Wedding*. He sheds light on aspects of idioms and proverbs that may pose problems when translating between different language cultures.

### 2.1. Translation strategies

Earlier in history, we see Jerome and Cicero's rejection of word-for-word translation in favor of sense-for-sense translation (Munday, 2016, p. 31). Based on Newmark's view, among various methods of translation, only semantic and communicative translation fulfill the two main aims of translation: first, accuracy, and second, economy. He suggests that semantic translation is more likely to be economical than communicative translation. Semantic translation is used for 'expressive' texts, while communicative translation is used for 'informative' and 'vocative' texts (Newmark, 1998). As Munday mentions, Julian House bases her model on comparative ST–TT analysis, leading to the assessment of translation quality by identifying 'mismatches' or 'errors' (House, 1997, p. 45). Schleiermacher considers only two paths open for the 'true' translator: the translator either leaves the writer in peace and moves the reader toward him, or leaves the reader in peace and moves the writer toward him (Schleiermacher 1813/2004: 49). Baker proposes the following strategies for translating idioms: 1. Using an idiom with similar meaning and form; 2. Using an idiom

with similar meaning but dissimilar form; 3. Paraphrasing, where the expression is often reduced to sense and translation loss occurs; 4. Omission, when the idiom has no close match and paraphrasing is either difficult or results in a clumsy style (Baker, 1992, pp. 72-78).

On the other hand, if the role of the translator is to reduce the gap between cultures, he should use a method that allows the target audience to understand the message in the same manner as the audience of the ST. Based on Newmark's view, among various methods of translation, only semantic and communicative translation fulfill the two main aims of translation: first, accuracy, and second, economy. He suggests that semantic translation is more economical than communicative translation. Semantic translation is used for 'expressive' texts, while communicative translation is used for 'informative' and 'vocative' texts (Newmark, 1998, p. 41). As Munday mentions, in House's definition of an overt translation, the TT is not represented as an original and is clearly not directed at the TT audience. On the other hand, a covert translation enjoys the status of an original ST in the target culture. The ST is not linked to its culture or audience; both the ST and TT address their respective receivers directly (Munday, 2016, p. 54).

Schleiermacher considers only two paths open for the 'true' translator: either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him, or the translator leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him. Schleiermacher calls the first method 'alienating' and the second 'naturalizing'. Baker proposes the following strategies for translating idioms: 1. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form, 2. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, 3. Paraphrasing, where the expression is often reduced to sense and translation loss occurs, 4. Omission, if the idiom has no close match and paraphrasing is either difficult or results in clumsy style (Baker, 1992, pp. 72-78). Examining the translation methods for the Qur'ān, we find two main approaches for translating Qur'ānic idioms: literal and free translations. In the first approach, the unit of translation is either a word or a sentence. In the second approach, the translator may focus on the meaning of the Qur'ānic utterances and their application in the target language or expound on the interpretations of the Qur'ānic idioms. If the translator opts for a TL-oriented translation, the reader of the translated text will understand the expression according to their own culture, which is quite different from its meaning in the source culture. In this method, the general meaning of the original text is reproduced, with fluency being much more important than fidelity.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Research design*

The unit of analysis in this study is the idiom. As this study is mainly interested in investigating the translation of idioms, the descriptive-comparative method is the most appropriate for analyzing and interpreting the way they are handled by the translators. Library study and manual idiom extraction techniques were also applied to conduct the study. This study is mainly interested in investigating the translation of idioms, so the descriptive-comparative method has been applied to analyze and interpret the way idioms are handled by the translators.

#### *3.2. Theoretical framework*

Schleiermacher's model of translation has been used as the theoretical framework of the study. Naturalization and Alienation are two translation extremes that he uses to analyze

translations both as product and process. To elaborate further, he considers only two paths open for the ‘true’ translator: Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him, or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him (Schleiermacher 1813/2004: 49). Schleiermacher calls the first method ‘alienating’ and the second ‘naturalizing’. Waddington’s model of translation quality assessment (model C) has also been applied to evaluate the translations based on the accuracy of conveying the SL message and the fluency of expressing the message in the TL.

Table 1. The scale of holistic method C

Level	Accuracy of transfer ST content	Quality of expression in TL	Degree of task completion	Mark
Level 5	Complete transfer of ST information; only minor revision needed to reach professional standard.	Almost all the translation reads like a piece originally written in English. There may be minor lexical, grammatical or spelling errors.	Successful	9-10
Level 4	Almost complete transfer; there may be one or two insignificant inaccuracies; requires certain amount of revision to reach professional standard.	Large sections read like a piece originally written in English. There are a number of lexical, grammatical or spelling errors.	Almost completely successful	7-8
Level 3	Transfer of the general idea(s) but with a number of lapses in accuracy; needs considerable revision to reach professional standard	Certain parts read like a piece originally written in English, but others read like a translation. There are a considerable number of lexical grammatical or spelling errors	Adequate	5-6
Level 2	Transfer undermined by serious inaccuracies; thorough revision required to reach professional standard.	Almost the entire text reads like a translation; there are continual lexical, grammatical or spelling errors.	Inadequate	3-4
Level 1	Totally inadequate transfer of ST content; the translation is not worth revising.	The candidate reveals a total lack of ability to express himself adequately in English	Totally inadequate	1-2

## 4. Data analysis

### 4.1. Analysis of Qur’ānic idioms

**Analysis of Translations of Qur’ānic Idioms (5:64).** The following ayah (verse) has been analyzed.

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ

The verse clearly portrays an example of the Jews’ undue and improper words. According to historical evidence, during the time of Prophet David and Solomon, the Jews were at the

peak of their power and reigned over large parts of the world. Over time, they continued to hold power, though not the same as before, until the arrival of Islam. Prophet Muhammad's (Divine peace upon him and his Household) confrontation with their unlawful power weakened them. This was the time when the Jews, who had lost their power and position, mockingly said that God's hands are chained as He does not help us! (Makarim Shirazi, 1995, p. 449) discusses the Qur'anic idiom in verse 17:29:

Table 2. English translations of the first ayah (17:29)

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلَعْنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ		
1	Ahmed Ali	The Jews say: "Bound are the hands of God." Tied be their own hands, and damned may they be for saying what they say! In fact, both His hands are open wide
2	Ahmed Raza Khan	And the Jews said, 'Allah's hand is tied'; may their hands be tied – and they are accursed for saying so! In fact, both His hands* are free
3	Arberry	The Jews have said, 'God's hand is fettered.' Fettered are their hands, and they are cursed for what they have said. Nay, but His hands are outspread
4	Asad	And the Jews say, "God's hand is shackled!" It is their own hands that are shackled; and rejected [by God] are they because of this their assertion. Nay, but wide are His hands stretched out
5	Helali & Khan	The Jews say: "Allah's Hand is tied up (i.e. He does not give and spend of His Bounty)." Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for what they uttered. Nay, both His Hands are widely outstretched
6	Itani	The Jews say, 'God's hand is tied.' It is their hands that are tied, and they are cursed for what they say. In fact, His hands are outstretched
7	Pickthall	The Jews say: Allah's hand is fettered. Their hands are fettered and they are accursed for saying so. Nay, but both His hands are spread out wide in bounty
8	Qarai	The Jews say, 'Allah's hand is tied up.' Tied up be their hands, and cursed be they for what they say! No, His hands are wide open
9	Sahih international	And the Jews say, "The hand of Allah is chained." Chained are their hands, and cursed are they for what they say. Rather, both His hands are extended
10	Sarwar	The Jews have said, "God's hands are bound." May they themselves be handcuffed and condemned for what they have said! God's hands are free
11	Shakir	And the Jews say: The hand of Allah is tied up! Their hands shall be shackled and they shall be cursed for what they say. Nay, both His hands are spread out
12	Yusuf Ali	The Jews say: "Allah's hand is tied up." Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for the (blasphemy) they utter. Nay, both His hands are widely outstretched

**Interpretational Analysis:** According to Nimūni exegesis, although the heads of the Jews were the only ones to say that God’s hands are chained, all the Jews agreed with such a statement. For this reason, the Qur’ān attributes this statement to all of them. That is why, at the beginning of the verse, God says: ‘and the Jews said.’ It should be noted that in the Arabic language, the term ‘yad,’ which means ‘hand,’ refers to two meanings: one is ‘hand,’ and the other is ‘power, reign, bounty, sovereignty.’ Since we mostly perform our primary tasks with our hands, this term is used to refer to other meanings as well (Makarim Shirazi, 1995, p. 449). According to the Aḥsan al-ḥadīth exegesis, the term ‘yad’ in this verse refers to God’s great power. In this exegesis, it is mentioned that the phrase ‘ghullat aydīhim’ refers to calamities and lack of prosperity that the Jews will receive due to their false claim (Qurashi, 2012, p. 103). In the Kowthar exegesis, it is explained that the clause ‘bal yadāhu mabsūtatan’ embraces the concept that God’s benevolence and mercy are permanent and last forever. Because these attributes are not separate from Him, He is the absolute benevolent one. The world is in need of God to continue existing, in the same way that it needs God for its creation (Jafari, 1999, p. 201).

**Linguistic Analysis:** The analysis has been displayed in tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Translations employing the alienating method

مَبْسُوطَاتَانِ	بَلْ	لُعِنُوا	عُلَّتْ	مَغْلُولَةٌ	يَدٌ
open wide	In fact	damned	tied	bound	hand
wide open	nay	accursed	fettered	tied	
stretched out	Rather	cursed	shackled	tied up	
outstretched	No	rejected	chained	shackled	
free		condemned	hand-cuffed	chained	
outspread			tied up	fettered	
spread out					
Extended					

Table 4. Translations employing the naturalizing method

مَبْسُوطَاتَانِ
spread out wide in bounty

In the first table, six key terms are defined, the meanings of which have posed challenges for translators. The first term is ‘yad,’ on which all translators agree. Although according to exegeses, this term refers to God’s power, reign, and bounty, none of the translators have acknowledged this idiomatic meaning. Instead, all have translated it as ‘hand.’ Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) defines ‘shackled’ as putting a shackle on someone, and ‘tie’ as fastening things together or holding them in a particular position (Longman, 2014). In the Almaany Dictionary, the term ‘maghlūla’ is defined as ‘being bound to something’ (Almaany, n.d.). The Hans Wehr Arabic-English Dictionary has suggested the verbs ‘shackled’ and ‘fettered’ as equivalents for this term. The next term, ‘ghullat,’ is derived from the same radical as ‘maghlūla.’ For this reason, the equivalents of these two terms are the same. The only difference between them is that they belong to two different parts of speech: ‘maghlūla’ is an adjective, while ‘ghullat’ is a verb (Cowan, 1976). The only distinct equivalent among those suggested for this verb by translators is the term ‘handcuffed,’ which the Longman Dictionary defines as ‘to put handcuffs on someone’ (Longman, 2014).

Regarding the next key term, ‘lu‘inū,’ five different equivalents have been proposed by the translators. Almaany Dictionary suggests the following equivalents for the simple form of this verb: ‘curse,’ ‘damn,’ ‘execrate,’ and ‘imprecate’ (Almaany, n.d.). Similarly, the Hans Wehr Dictionary offers the equivalents ‘curse,’ ‘damn,’ and ‘execrate’ (Cowan, 1976). To determine the most suitable equivalent among these options, we must consult the Longman Dictionary to understand the subtle differences between these synonyms. The definitions provided in the Longman Dictionary are as follows (Longman, 2014):

- **Curse:** To say or think bad things about someone or something because they have made you angry.
- **Accursed:** Used to express strong anger toward something.
- **Damn:** To condemn someone to Hell after death, often as a form of punishment.
- **Execrate:** To express strong disapproval or hatred for someone or something.
- **Condemn:** To impose a severe punishment after determining someone’s guilt in a crime.
- **Reject:** To refuse to show love or attention to someone.

The fourth key term is the preposition ‘**bal,**’ for which six different translations have been suggested. Almaany Dictionary defines it as ‘*but,*’ ‘*even,*’ ‘*however,*’ and ‘*yet*’ (Almaany, n.d.). Hans Wehr provides additional equivalents such as ‘*nay,*’ ‘*rather,*’ ‘*even,*’ ‘*but,*’ ‘*however,*’ and ‘*yet*’ (Cowan, 1976). According to Longman Dictionary, ‘*nay*’ is an old usage of saying ‘*no*’ (Longman, 2014). The last key term is ‘**mabsūṭātān,**’ for which eight different translations have been offered. Almaany Dictionary suggests the following equivalents: ‘*open,*’ ‘*stretched out,*’ ‘*unfolded,*’ and ‘*unrolled*’ (Almaany, n.d.). Hans Wehr Arabic-English Dictionary lists ‘*extended,*’ ‘*outstretched,*’ ‘*spread out,*’ ‘*flat,*’ ‘*open,*’ and ‘*extensive*’ as possible equivalents for this adjective (Cowan, 1976). To ensure the precise meaning, it is necessary to consult Longman Dictionary for these terms as well. A closer look at the table reveals that some translators have used different parts of speech for the same term, such as ‘*spread out*’ (past participle) and ‘*outspread*’ (adjective), or ‘*stretched out*’ and ‘*outstretched.*’ Others have offered the same term with inversion, such as ‘*wide open*’ and ‘*open wide.*’ To clarify, we can refer to Longman Dictionary for the following definitions:

- **Wide open:** Completely open.
- **Outstretched:** Stretched out to full length.
- **Spread out:** To cover a large area.
- **Extended:** Longer than expected or planned (Longman, 2014).

**Structural Analysis:** The analysis has been introduced in two categories as determined by the selected theoretical framework:

**Translations Employing Alienating Method:** When considering the structure of the translations, Arberry and Sarwar are the two translators who have opted to use the present perfect tense of the verb ‘say’ to refer to the quote. In contrast, Ahmed Raza Khan is the only



translator who has used the simple past form of the verb ‘say.’ All other translators have used the simple present form of ‘say’ to convey the statement of the Jews. Ahmed Ali, notably, is the only translator who adopts an archaic style in translating the direct speech ‘yadullah maghlūla’ by altering the word order. He places the verb at the beginning of the sentence, rendering it as ‘Bound are the hands of God’. Regarding the sentence ‘ghullat aydihim wa lu‘inū bimā qālū,’ Arberry, Asad, Itani, Pickthall, and Sahih International have used the simple present tense to refer to God’s response to the Jews. This structure is often used to indicate that a wish or statement has already been answered. Ahmed Raza Khan and Sarwar, on the other hand, have translated the second part of the verse using the modal ‘may,’ while the others have employed the verb ‘be’ to convey this statement from God. Furthermore, seven translators have used the possessive ‘of’ to refer to the hand of God, while ten translators have used the possessive ‘s’ to indicate ‘God’s hand’.

**Translations Employing Naturalizing Method:** The translation by Helali & Khan is the only one that includes additional clarification of the verse within brackets, providing an explanation in their own words. Pickthall also briefly refers to the connotation of the idiomatic verse, using the term ‘bounty’ in the phrase ‘spread out wide in bounty’. Ahmed Raza Khan, Helali & Khan, Itani, Qarai, Shakir, and Yusuf Ali are the translators who correctly use the native-like verb phrase ‘someone’s hands are tied’ to convey the meaning of the first part of the verse.

**Assessing the Translations’ Quality:** Ahmed Ali, Asad, Arberry, Pickthall, Sahih International, and Sarwar are the translators who have used the alienating method for translating this verse. In the case of this idiom, none of the translators have used the naturalizing method, meaning that all have preferred literal translations and disregarded the deeper layers of meaning behind the message. Ahmed Ali employs an archaic structure by placing the verb at the beginning, as in “bound are...” and “tied be...”. He also uses the unusual phrase “saying what they say” to remain as faithful as possible to the ST. However, in doing so, he sacrifices the fluency of his translation, making his text seem more like a direct translation than a natural rendering of the meaning. Sarwar is the only translator in this group who uses the term ‘free’ as an equivalent for ‘mabsūṭātān’, suggesting that by using the phrase ‘God’s hands’, he is referring to God’s will power. However, he also uses ‘condemn’, which is not an accurate equivalent for ‘lu‘inū’. Arberry uses the archaic term ‘nay’, which is not plain English and may sound outdated to modern readers.

Asad has used the term ‘rejected’ as an equivalent for ‘lu‘inū’, which is not accurate according to Arabic-English dictionaries. A significant issue with Asad’s translation is that large sections sound unnatural in English due to his literal approach, such as “because of this their assertion” and “wide are His hands stretched out”. Pickthall, like Arberry, uses the archaic word ‘nay’. The key difference in Pickthall’s translation is his use of the phrase ‘wide in bounty’ as an equivalent for ‘mabsūṭātān’. Here, Pickthall attempts to convey the message of the idiom, i.e., God’s free will. However, the term ‘bounty’ is not found in the original Arabic, and using it outside of a bracket may lead the reader to incorrectly ascribe it directly to God.

Sahih International also employs an archaic style, using inversion with ‘chained are...’. Qarai, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Itani, Helali & Khan, and Ahmed Raza Khan have generally used the alienating method. Ahmed Raza Khan, similar to Sarwar, has used the distinctive equivalent ‘free’ to convey the message of the idiom—that is, God’s unlimited power. A noteworthy feature of his translation is his inclusion of an explanatory phrase inside brackets: ‘He does not give and spend of His bounty’. This phrase helps the reader grasp the

idiomatic message more clearly. Itani and Ahmed Raza Khan use ‘in fact’ as an equivalent for ‘bal’, while all other translators in this group opt for the archaic term ‘nay’. Yusuf Ali, in an attempt to clarify the verse further, uses the term ‘blasphemy’ inside a bracket. This addition serves to clarify the meaning of the verse, adding an extra layer of interpretation.

### *Analysis of Translations of Qur’ānic Idioms (17:29)*

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ

Moderation is a fundamental principle in Islam. Many verses in the Qur’ān encourage us to avoid extremes, and one of the most notable examples is the following verse. This verse is tied to a story with the following background: One day, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) was sitting in the mosque when a child approached him and said that his mother needed a shirt. Since the Prophet had no shirt other than the one he was wearing, he told the child to follow him home. There, Prophet Muhammad removed his garment and gave it to the child. It was at this moment that God revealed the following verse to warn against both stinginess and extravagance. (Ansari, 2003, p. 545).

Table 5. Translations of Qur’ānic idioms (17:29)

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ		
1	Ahmed Ali	Do not be niggardly, nor extravagant
2	Ahmed Raza Khan	And do not keep your hand tied to your neck nor open it completely
3	Arberry	And keep not thy hand chained to thy neck, nor outspread it widespread altogether
4	Asad	And neither allow thy hand to remain shackled to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to the utmost limit [of thy capacity]
5	Helali & Khan	And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift)
6	Itani	And do not keep your hand tied to your neck, nor spread it out fully
7	Pickthall	And let not thy hand be chained to thy neck nor open it with a complete opening
8	Qarai	Do not keep your hand chained to your neck, nor open it altogether
9	Sahih international	And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely
10	Sarwar	Do not be stingy nor over generous
11	Shakir	And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth
12	Yusuf Ali	Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach

**Interpretational Analysis:** To conduct a more precise analysis, it is essential to consult prominent exegeses. According to these sources, the first idiomatic phrase in the verse refers to stinginess, or the unwillingness to spend money on others, while the second idiomatic phrase points to extravagance. Those who are extravagant open their hands so widely that, even in times of rain, not a single raindrop remains in their hands. The verse warns against

spending so excessively that nothing is left for oneself, leading to embarrassment before others. This idiom clearly cautions against going to extremes (Tabatabai, 1974, p. 114).

Moderation is always advised, both in giving to the needy and in refraining from doing so. Excessive generosity can lead to rebuke and alienation from others (Makarim Shirazi, 1995, p. 90). The wealthy should spend within their means, and so should the poor (Ansari, 2003, p. 545). The first idiomatic phrase in this verse refers to a hand that keeps everything to itself, avoiding being open. In contrast, the second idiomatic phrase describes a hand that is so wide open that it cannot hold anything. Those whose hands are tied, unable to give to the poor, will find themselves unable to help, while those whose hands are always extended may find they have nothing left to meet their own needs (Mughniya, 2004, p. 71; Jafari, 1999, p. 283).

**Linguistic Analysis.** The analysis comes in the form of tables 6 and 7 as follows.

Table 6. Translations employing alienating method

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ	مَغْلُولَةً	تَبْسُطُهَا	كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ
Do not keep	shackled	Open	Completely
Keep not	chained	Outspread	Widespread altogether
Neither allow	tied	Stretch forth	To the utmost limit of thy capacity
Let not be		Spread out	with a complete opening
Do not make		Extend	to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift)
Make not			Fully
			to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth
			Altogether

Table 7. Translations employing naturalizing method

مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ	تَبْسُطُهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ
Niggardly	Extravagant
Stingy	
	Over generous

In the two tables above, the first step involves categorizing all twelve translations into two groups based on the translation method they employed. In the second step, various equivalents chosen for the key terms in the Qur'ānic verse are listed. According to the first table, which examines translations using the alienating method, four key terms are identified in this Qur'ānic verse. For the first key term, *maghlūla*, four different translations are provided: shackled, chained, and tied. According to the Longman Contemporary Dictionary, the term shackled is defined as placing a shackle on someone, which is synonymous with the verb chain. The term tie is defined as fastening things together or holding them in a particular position, and it is also closely related to fasten (Longman, 2014).

*According to the Almaany Dictionary, the term maghlūla is defined as being bound to something, a general definition that encompasses all four of the English equivalents. However, if we were to choose the most appropriate translation, it would be beneficial to refer to the Hans Wehr Arabic-English Dictionary, which selects shackled and fettered as the equivalents for the Arabic term maghlūla (Cowan, 1976).*

*This Qur'ānic verse forbids us from going to extremes, expressing this prohibition through the verb 'ja'ala'. The two verbs 'do not keep' and 'keep not' are considered equivalent in meaning. Similarly, the verbs 'neither allow' and 'let not be' are used in a way that implies a presupposition in the verse. This could lead the reader to assume that the hands possess the willpower to choose their actions, and it is our responsibility not to let them act as they wish. As for the verbs 'do not make' and 'make not', the use of 'make' emphasizes our free choice in whether to keep our hands tied or not. According to the Almaany Dictionary, this Arabic term means to fix or set (Almaany, n.d.). The Hans Wehr Dictionary suggests the same equivalents for this verb form, which is classified as type 1 (Cowan, 1976).*

*The next Arabic key term is 'basaṭa', for which six different equivalents have been suggested. 'Outspread' is defined as spreading out flat or completely. 'Extend' means to stretch out a hand, while 'be stretched to the limit' refers to having just enough money or resources to meet one's needs. The Almaany Dictionary lists the following equivalents for the verb 'basaṭa': 'extent', 'outspread', 'outstretch', 'spread out', and 'stretch out' (Almaany, n.d.).*

The Hans Wehr Dictionary offers similar equivalents for this verb form (type 1): 'spread out', 'stretch out', and 'extend'. The final key term is 'kul al-Baṣṭ', which is consistently translated as an adverb in all translations. This term has prompted different interpretations among translators. Some have rendered it as a single-term adverb, such as 'completely' or 'fully'. Others have used an adverbial phrase, such as 'to the utmost reach/limit/stretching' (Cowan, 1976). This phrase sounds more natural and, according to the Longman Dictionary, refers to the greatest amount or the most that can be done. Another adverbial phrase selected is 'widespread altogether' (Longman, 2014). There is also a more literal translation, 'with a complete opening', which may sound unnatural or cumbersome in the target language. Regarding the Arabic meaning of 'kul al-Baṣṭ', the Almaany Dictionary provides the following equivalents: 'expanse', 'extent', and 'stretch' (Almaany, n.d.). The Hans Wehr Arabic-English Dictionary suggests 'extension' and 'spreading' as equivalents (Cowan, 1976).

Looking at the second table, we see that three translators have used the naturalizing method of translation, offering three different renditions. All of them have used two adjectives as equivalents for the two parts of this idiomatic verse. Regarding the first translation, the term 'niggardly' is used to convey the idea of stinginess. According to the Longman Dictionary, 'niggardly' means unwilling to spend money or be generous (Longman, 2014). This word emphasizes reluctance to spend money. However, the verse does not only address those who are unwilling to be generous—it also speaks to those who do not spend money at all. To put it simply, some people spend money reluctantly, while others do not spend money at all, whether eagerly or unwillingly.

Another equivalent offered for the first idiomatic phrase in this Qur'ānic verse is 'stingy', which represents the primary denotative meaning of this concept. Both 'stingy' and 'niggardly' are considered synonyms in the Longman Dictionary (Longman, 2014). For the second idiomatic phrase, two equivalents are given: 'extravagant' and 'over-generous'. 'Extravagant' is defined as spending a lot of money, especially more than is necessary or more than one can afford. This definition is more comprehensive and includes the meanings of the other two terms.

**Structural Analysis:** The analysis comes in two categories as specified by the selected theoretical framework:

**Translations Employing ‘Alienating’ Method:** In these translations, the translators prioritize the ST. Among the twelve translations, *Shakir*, *Sahih International*, *Qarai*, *Pickthall*, *Itani*, *Asad*, *Arberry* and *Ahmed Raza Khan* have employed the absolutely alienating method. They place the ST at the forefront of their translation, leaving it to the reader to infer the exact message and meaning of the verse from the co-text. By using this method, the translators emphasize the value of the ST, introduce foreign concepts and culture into the target language, and remain faithful to the sense and form of the original text. As a result, these translations may sound unfamiliar to the target reader, who may not fully grasp the meaning in the same way as the readers of the ST.

Translation methods that primarily rely on the ST have both strengths and weaknesses. One of their strengths is that they faithfully transfer the structure and vocabulary of the source language into the target language. For this reason, these methods are considered linguistically loyal to the ST. Additionally, such methods avoid excessive exposition and interpretation, as these could undermine the level of fidelity to the original text.

However, as mentioned earlier, these methods also have some weaknesses. They may result in incompatibility with the structural patterns of the target language, lead to ambiguous or even incorrect translations of idioms, and fail to capture the deeper layers of meaning in the Qur’ānic verses. As evident, the translators aim to transfer the idioms as they are understood in the source language, often without considering the fluency of the translation in the target language. While the importance and status of the Qur’ān as the ST are preserved, the message of the verse may not be conveyed as effectively as it would be to the source language readers. In this approach, both accuracy and fluency are sacrificed in favor of maintaining the structure of the idiom.

The translators mentioned above do not directly address the concepts of spending money or giving to others; instead, it is left to the readers to infer the intended meaning of these images. In contrast, such concepts are implicit in the Arabic idiom itself. This Arabic idiom directly conveys these ideas to the readers of the source language, referring specifically to the context within the source language. The translators have attempted to preserve the euphemistic nature of the idiom. While the individual words are accurately translated, when considering the definition of an idiom, it becomes clear that the overall meaning of the idiom is not simply the sum of the literal meanings of its words. Instead, all the vocabulary is translated literally, relying on the denotative meanings of the words in the translation.

**Translations Employing ‘Naturalizing’ Method:** Regarding this idiomatic Qur’ānic verse, Ahmed Ali, Sarwar, and Helali are the three translators who have used only two adjectives as equivalents for the two idiomatic phrases in the verse, resulting in a reduction of word count in the English translation. These translators did not use idiomatic expressions from the target language to translate the verse in the same way it appears in the source language. It can be concluded that Ahmed Ali, Sarwar and Helali employed the naturalizing method of translation. In other words, they prioritized the fluency of the translation, ensuring that the reader would be at ease. According to Schleiermacher, the translators aimed to ‘leave the reader in peace’ as much as possible, aligning the ST with the patterns of the target language.

**Translations Employing ‘Almost Alienating’ Method:** We cannot definitively say that all translations strictly follow one of the two methods without deviation; rather, it can be argued that there is no fixed approach for these translations. Some translators have combined both approaches, using one as the foundation of their translation and the other for interpretation. Others have adopted one of the extremes, either naturalizing or alienating. Yusuf Ali, Helali & Khan are among the translators who have produced an "almost alienating" translation. We refer to it as such because, while they place the ST at the forefront, they also incorporate some naturalizing equivalents in their translations.

**Assessing the Translations’ Quality:** Ahmed Raza Khan, Arberry, Asad, Itani, Pickthall, Qarai, and Shakir are the translators who have used the absolutely alienating method of translation. A common characteristic among these translators is that the message of the idiom may not be clear to readers from other cultures. In other words, the idiom is not rendered in a way that aligns with the reader's own language and cultural context. While the meaning of the idiom can be inferred from the translation, no equivalent idiom exists in the English language. The key difference among the translations using this method is that some translators have included additional clarifications through explanatory brackets to address any ambiguities, while others have left the idiomatic message uninterpreted. Arberry, for example, uses the archaic term ‘thy’ and adopts an old-fashioned style by inverting the verb phrase ‘keep not’ as an equivalent for ‘wa la taj‘al’. Additionally, ‘keep’ is not an exact equivalent for the Arabic verb ‘ja‘ala’. Arberry also introduces the unnecessary word ‘altogether’ to emphasize the idea of being overgenerous.

The main issue with the translations of Ahmed Raza Khan and Itani is that they leave the reader unaware of the deeper message from God embedded in the idiom. Like Arberry, they use the term ‘keep’ as an equivalent for ‘ja‘ala’, which is not an accurate match. However, their translations are straightforward and fluent for the target reader. Qarai’s translation is similar to those of these translators, with one key difference: Qarai does not emphasize the concept of overgenerosity and immoderation. Instead, he simply translates it as ‘nor open it altogether’.

Asad has used the verb ‘allow’, which is not an accurate equivalent for ‘ja‘ala’. He also employs the archaic term ‘thy’, which makes the translation sound less fluent. To convey the idea of overgenerosity, he uses the phrase ‘to the utmost limit of thy capacity’, which feels more like a translation than an original text. Similarly, Shakir uses the repetitive phrase ‘nor stretch it forth to the utmost limit of its stretching forth’ to emphasize the idea of overgenerosity. This repetition reduces the fluency of his translation, making it read as a translation rather than a natural text. Pickthall also uses the archaic term ‘thy’. His choice of the phrase ‘open it with complete opening’ makes the translation sound unfamiliar. Additionally, ‘let not’ is used as an equivalent for ‘ja‘ala’, which is not a precise match.

Regarding the translation of Sahih International, it should be noted that the grammatical structure ‘do not ... or’ could be replaced with a more natural structure, such as ‘neither ... nor’. Helali and Khan, and Yusuf Ali have employed a mostly alienating method. In Helali and Khan’s translation, ‘let not’ is not an accurate equivalent for ‘ja‘ala’, and the inversion in this structure gives the translation an archaic style. However, the use of the phrase ‘like a miser’ to convey stinginess and ‘like a spendthrift’ to convey overgenerosity makes the message clearer.

Yusuf Ali provides the reader with additional clarification by using the phrase ‘like a niggard’s’. He also uses the archaic vocabulary ‘thy’ and the archaic construction ‘make not’

which is not an accurate equivalent for 'ja'ala'. Ahmed Ali and Sarwar, on the other hand, have employed a fully naturalizing method. With this approach, the reader is not able to grasp the specific image depicted in the verse, as God used particular words to convey a message. The example God provided to illustrate generosity and stinginess is obscured. The denotative meanings of words such as 'hands', 'tied', 'open', and 'completely' are not conveyed due to the naturalizing translation, which focuses only on the message of the idiom. Although both translators have used the fully naturalizing method, their choice of vocabulary differs significantly.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Results of the first ayah (5:64)

According to the Waddington's model of TQA, all the twelve translations can be ranked as follows:

Table 8. Ranking the twelve translations

Translator	Level of transfer of ST content and fluency of TL text	Task completion	Mark
Ahmed Raza Khan, Yusuf Ali, Helali &	Level 5	Successful	9
Shakir, Itani	Level 4	Almost completely successful	8
Pickthall	Level 4	Almost completely successful	7
Arberry Sahih international	Level 3	Adequate	6
Sarwar, Ahmed Ali, Asad	Level 3	Adequate	5

According to the table 8, four translators received a score of 9, two received a score of 8, one received a score of 7, two received a score of 6, and three received a score of 5. The scores are classified into three levels based on Waddington's model: five translations are rated at level 3, three translations are rated at level 4, and four translations are rated at level 5:

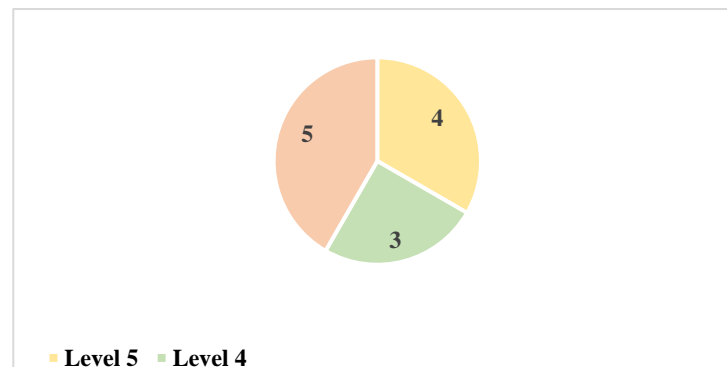


Figure 1. The quality level of the translations (5:64)



According to the main table, which includes the twelve translations, all of the translators have chosen the ‘absolutely alienating’ method of translation. Two parts of the verse required further explanation to convey the connotations hidden within it: ‘maghlūla’ and ‘mabsūtatān’. Regarding the term ‘mabsūtatān’, Pickthall was the only translator who addressed the hidden message of the verse at the end of his translation. In our suggested translation, this strength in Pickthall’s rendition has been retained to reflect this connotation. As for the term ‘maghlūla’, several English dictionaries were consulted, and three verb phrases conveying the notion of (in)capability were identified. One of these was both literally and interpretively compatible with the verse. In other words, a translation can be produced using both alienating and naturalizing methods, with both approaches supporting the same translation. This is because the Arabic idiom, as expressed by the Jews, has a corresponding expression in English that conveys the same message.

### **The English Idioms and Phrases Implying the Notion of (In)Capability**

#### **Somebody’s Hands Are Tied:**

- **Merriam-Webster:** Used to say that someone is unable to act freely because something (such as a rule or law) prevents it (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.).
- **Cambridge Dictionary:** If your hands are tied, you are not free to behave in the way that you would like (Cambridge, n.d.).
- **Collins Dictionary:** If you say that your hands are tied, it means that something is preventing you from acting in the way that you want to (Forsyth, 2014).
- **Longman Activator:** If someone’s hands are tied, they cannot do what they want because of particular conditions or rules imposed by someone else (Longman, 2014).

#### **Not in One’s Power to Do Something:**

- **Collins Dictionary:** Not able or allowed to (Forsyth, 2014).
- **Longman Activator:** To be unable to do something because your job does not give you the authority or right to do it (Longman, 2014).

#### **Not Be in a Position to Do Something / Be in No Position to Do Something:**

- **Merriam-Webster:** Not able to (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.).
- **Cambridge Dictionary:** To be able to do something, usually because you have the necessary experience, authority, or money (Cambridge, n.d.).
- **Collins Dictionary:** Able to (Forsyth, 2014).
- **Longman Activator:** To not be able to do something because you do not have enough knowledge, money, or authority (Longman, 2014).

### *5.2. Results of the second ayah (17:29)*

In this chapter, after listing the twelve translations of the Qur’ānic verse, three types of analysis were conducted: interpretational, linguistic, and structural. Next, each translation

was analyzed based on the method used, either the naturalizing or the alienating approach, as defined by Schleiermacher. Finally, all translations were evaluated and ranked according to Waddington's holistic model of translation quality assessment. The results are as in table 9.

Table 9. Results of the second ayah (17:29)

Translator	Level of transfer of original content and fluency of translated text	Task Completion	Mark
Sarwar, Helali & Khan, Ahmed Ali	Level 4	Almost completely successful	7
Itani, Asad, Yusuf Ali, Sahih international, Ahmed Raza Khan	Level 3	Adequate	6
Pickthall, Qarai, Shakir, Arberry	Level 3	Adequate	5

According to the table 9, three translators received a score of 7, five received a score of 6, and four received a score of 5. Following Waddington's model, it can be concluded that the quality of the translations for verse 17:29 falls into two levels: level 3 and level 4. However, most translators produced a level-3 translation, which is considered an adequate translation according to Waddington's framework.

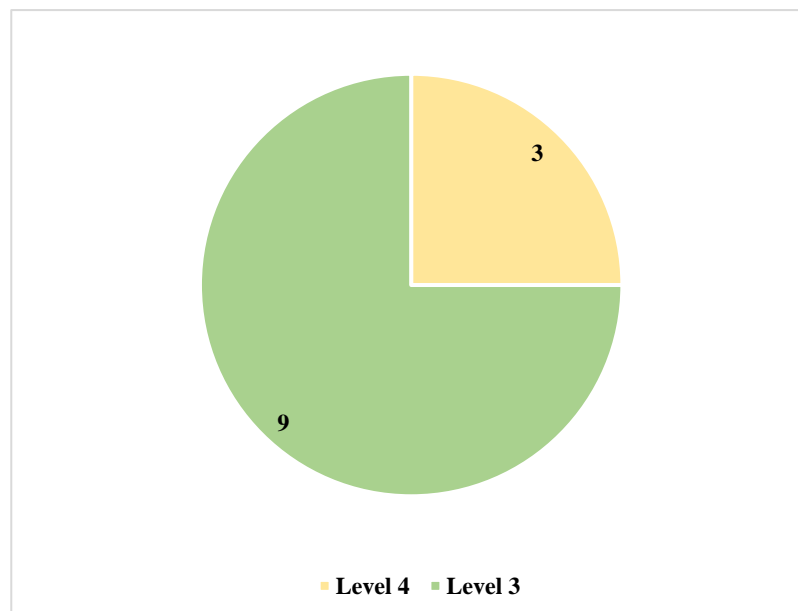


Figure 2. The quality level of the translations (17:29)

### ***The English Idioms and Phrases Implying the Notion of Stinginess and Extravagance***

The idiomatic translation method has not been applied by the aforementioned translators. This method could have conveyed the form of the SL text to TL readers in a way that reflects

how it is perceived by SL readers. Considering the weaknesses in the previously mentioned translations, we have provided a selection of English idioms related to the notion of stinginess, along with their definitions from three prominent dictionaries: Merriam-Webster, Collins, and Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge, n.d.; Forsyth, 2014; Merriam & Merriam, n.d.). These three dictionaries were chosen for their clear and distinct explanations of each idiom. Other dictionaries with similar definitions are not included here.

#### **Hand to Mouth:**

- **Merriam-Webster:** Having or providing nothing beyond basic necessities (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.).
- **Cambridge Dictionary:** Having only just enough money to live (Cambridge, n.d.).
- **Collins Dictionary:** A hand-to-mouth existence means having barely enough food or money to survive (Forsyth, 2014).
- **Longman Dictionary:** Living with just enough money and food to get by (Longman, 2014).

#### **Close/Tight-Fisted:**

- **Merriam-Webster:** Stingy; tight-fisted (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.).
- **Cambridge Dictionary:** Unwilling to spend money (Cambridge, n.d.).
- **Collins Dictionary:** Very careful with money; mean (Forsyth, 2014).
- **Longman Dictionary:** Not generous with money (Longman, 2014).

#### **Money to Burn:**

- **Merriam-Webster:** A large amount of money to spend (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.).
- **Cambridge Dictionary:** Spending a lot of money on unnecessary things (Cambridge, n.d.).
- **Collins Dictionary:** Having more money than one needs (Forsyth, 2014).
- **Longman Dictionary:** Having extra money to spend on non-essential items (Longman, 2014).

Upon reviewing the three idioms, the first two refer to the concept of stinginess, while the third relates to extravagance. Considering the linguistic characteristics of these English idioms, the second one ("close/tight-fisted") is the most suitable. It closely mirrors the Arabic idiom both in terms of the vocabulary used and the meanings provided by the dictionaries.

Suggestions for Translations. The following contains suggestions for translations to substituted the current works under study:

### ***Suggestions for the translation of the verse 5:64***

Having referred to the dictionaries, we observed that there were three main verb phrases that are compatible with meaning of the verse, by the use of which English native speakers imply the notion of (in) capability. Amongst these three, the verb phrase ‘someone’s hands are tied’ is the one that matches the verse both literally and interpretationally: ‘and the Jews said, ‘God’s hands are tied’, may their own hands be tied and be cursed for what they said; rather, His hands are open [in bounty]’. Since the native-used phrase ‘someone’s hands are tied’ is literally in line with the verse, so it could be argued that our suggested translation will be based on the both approaches at the same time. That is to say, either of the alienating and naturalizing methods of translations would lead to the same translation of this verse. Therefore, the only part of the verse that in need of further clarification is the term ‘mabsūṭātān’, for which the bracket ‘[in bounty]’ was included in our suggested translation, as Pickthall has done.

### ***Suggestions for the translation of the verse 17:29***

Concerning the marks and analyses, the following translations are offered:

**First Suggestion.** Based on the points of strength available in the three translations applying naturalizing method, we can suggest the following translation for this Qur’ānic verse: ‘Do not be close-fisted nor extravagant’ This translation includes both the vocabularies and structure that the best-rated translations have used while opting for the English idiom which is closer to the Arabic idiom in term of meaning and words.

**Second Suggestion.** Regarding those translations that have selected the alienating method of translation, a translation which is linguistically loyal to the SL is also suggested: ‘And do not make your hand tied to your neck (like a miser), nor overextend it (like an extravagant)’.

## **6. Conclusion**

Idioms, in any language, serve as cultural and historical entities whose underlying meanings must be conveyed in their entirety within the context of the target language. The more deeply rooted an idiom is in the source language, the more challenging it becomes to translate it accurately into the target language. The difficulty arises from the idiom's cultural significance and figurative meaning, as idioms rarely convey their literal sense. Therefore, capturing the rhetorical aspects of these idioms in the target language is a key challenge in translation. However, the advantage of translation into the target language is that it results in a product that makes sense within the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language. The downside, however, is that this approach might deprive the reader of insights into a foreign culture and the practices of its people.

Foreignizing the ST idioms, or translating them faithfully, allows the reader to access a different worldview. The translator bears the responsibility of transferring the cultural heritage of the SL to the target language audience. Domesticating ST idioms, on the other hand, is only feasible when there is a significant overlap between the cultures, and the situations described in the idioms can be reproduced in the target culture. The difficulty increases when idioms are specific to a particular speech community and reflect that community’s unique mindset. Advocates of this method argue that translation should emphasize what is universal, fostering cross-cultural understanding rather than separating

cultures through a strict, literal translation. Ultimately, the translation of idioms should aim to evoke a similar stylistic effect in the target language reader as the original idioms do for the SL reader. When translating idioms, it is essential to convey the underlying message of the phrase. To achieve this, a ‘thought-for-thought’ translation approach is often recommended. Regarding Schleiermacher’s methods of translation, he identifies two extreme approaches: the ‘absolutely alienating’ and the ‘absolutely naturalizing’ methods. While he does not explicitly refer to the concept of absoluteness, he does not consider translations that fall between these extremes, which may adopt a combination of both methods.

Upon reviewing the analyses of the five Qur’ānic verses in question, it becomes apparent that some translations fall into this overlooked middle ground. These translations blend elements of both methods: some parts are translated using the naturalizing approach, while other parts follow the alienating method. Consequently, the translation ends up being a mix of both approaches. In such cases, the translation can be categorized as either ‘almost naturalizing’ or ‘almost alienating.’ If the majority of the verse is translated using the naturalizing method, it can be said to follow the ‘almost naturalizing’ approach. The reverse applies for ‘almost alienating.’ It is important to note that not all translations fit neatly into one of the two categories Schleiermacher proposed. Some translations fall somewhere in between, being neither ‘absolutely alienating’ nor ‘absolutely naturalizing,’ but rather predominantly naturalizing or predominantly alienating.

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## Comparing Dynamic and Formal Equivalence in Three English Translations of Nahj al-Balagha: A Study of Selected Letters

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### ABSTRACT

The translation of religious texts plays a crucial role within the translators' community, prompting many translators to strive for the most appropriate equivalents in order to convey the themes and ideas as comprehensively as possible. The primary objective of the present study was to investigate the differences in equivalence among translators while translating twenty conveniently selected letters from Nahj al-Balagha from the original to the target text. Specifically, it aimed to determine whether the three English translations of Nahj al-Balagha by Mohammad Askari Jafari, Morteza Motahhari, and Sayed Ali Reza convey the same message. In this context, the research sought to identify any significant differences in equivalence among the three Persian-to-English translations by these translators. Nida's (1964) model of equivalence served as the framework for the study, allowing a comparison of the three English translations of letters 40 to 60. This analysis focused on identifying the types of equivalence used based on Nida's distinctions between dynamic and formal equivalence. The results indicated significant differences among the three translations: Sayed Ali Reza's and Motahhari's translations were notably more formal in tone, while Askari Jafari's translation was characterized as dynamic. These findings can be informative for readers interested in further research on the translation of religious texts, including Nahj al-Balagha.

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## 1. Introduction

To date, many theorists and linguists have explored the intricate relationship between language, equivalence, culture, and translation. Brown (1994) states that “Language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” (p. 165). Furthermore, Dweik (2000) argues that the differences between cultures can create challenges not only in translation but also in learning foreign languages. The task of translating religious texts from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) is particularly challenging due to the specificity of certain lexical and cultural items rooted in the structure and culture of the SL. This complexity is heightened when interpreting religious terms and collocations, especially when transitioning from an Islamic culture to a Western one (e.g., translating Arabic or Persian into English). A significant issue arises in finding suitable equivalents when translating collocations that pertain to specific religious and technical concepts deeply embedded in Islamic culture. Equivalence is a central concern in translation; as Catford (1965) asserts, translation involves replacing textual materials in one language with equivalent materials in another.

Thus, the equivalence of textual materials is paramount. In this context, Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) conducted an investigation into culturally specific terms in religious texts. They suggest that terms and collocations in religious texts are often comprehensive and exclusive in meaning, carrying unique linguistic and semantic features that are culturally specific. Consequently, these terms may be untranslatable, with no direct equivalents in the TL. For example, Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) highlight “Jihad” and “tayammum” as instances where translators may encounter difficulties in conveying religious concepts that lack counterparts in English-speaking cultures.

Given this challenge, many Muslim translators have endeavored to translate significant religious scriptures in the Islamic world, seeking the most appropriate interpretations and suitable equivalents to convey meanings and messages effectively. However, it appears that fewer scholars have focused on the holy scripture of Nahj al-Balagha, particularly regarding the issue of equivalence. This study aims to investigate the challenges translators face concerning equivalence when rendering cultural collocations in the religious text of Nahj al-Balagha. To this end, the present study examines three English translations of Nahj al-Balagha. One translation is by Sayed Ali Reza, published in Qum in 2008. Another is by Morteza Motahhari, an Iranian cleric, philosopher, lecturer, and politician, whose translation has also been published in Qum. The third translation is by Mohammad Askari Jafari, a theorist and translator of both Nahj al-Balagha and the Holy Qur’ān.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Theoretical considerations

The intimate relationship between language and culture and their impacts on translation have led to the development of various theories by theorists and linguists (Nida, 1964; Jakobson, 1965; Catford, 1965; Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995). Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) describe equivalence-oriented translation as a procedure that replicates the same situation as in the original text while using entirely different wording. They argue that equivalence is the ideal method when translating proverbs and idioms. However, they later acknowledge that glossaries and collections of idiomatic expressions can never be exhaustive. They conclude

that “the need for creating equivalences arises from the situation, and it is in the situation of the SL text that translators must look for a solution” (as cited in Munday, 2009, p. 58).

Jakobson’s (1959) study of equivalence introduced a new perspective to the theoretical analysis of translation by presenting a different notion of equivalence. According to his theory, translation involves two equivalent messages expressed in different codes. Occasionally, translators may encounter challenges in finding a translation equivalent, resulting in non-equivalence. Nida (1964) identifies two types of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence refers to a TL item that closely represents the SL word or phrase. Nida and Taber (1969) clarify that formal equivalents are not always found between language pairs. Catford’s (1965) approach to translation equivalence differs from Nida’s, as Catford favors a more linguistically based perspective. His main contribution to translation theory is the introduction of the concepts of types and shifts of translation, which are particularly useful when addressing issues of equivalence or non-equivalence.

Baker (1992) provides an intriguing discussion of equivalence, offering a detailed list of conditions that define the concept. She distinguishes between equivalence at the word level and above the word level, including grammatical equivalence, textual equivalence, and pragmatic equivalence. Baker emphasizes that equivalence is the foremost consideration for translators. The translator’s role is to recreate the author’s intention within another culture in a way that enables the TL reader to understand it clearly. In this regard, Brown (1994) states, “Language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” (p. 165).

## *2.2 Empirical background*

Many scholars have examined the role of culture and the use of equivalence in translation. Al-Khanji and Hussein (1999) investigated the challenges students face in learning equivalences and collocations, as well as the strategies they employ when unable to correctly collocate lexical words. Their study involved a sample of 120 second-year English majors at the University of Jordan, who completed a test consisting of 50 collocation and equivalence items based on their frequency in textbooks and English courses. The results indicated that students’ incorrect responses fell into three categories: the first category, based on the SL, included literal transliteration, categorized as “negative transfer” (p. 140). The second category, based on the TL, involved “semantic contiguity,” where students replaced a lexical item with another that shared certain semantic features. The third category was identified as the “lexical reduction strategy” (p. 135).

Dweik (2000) asserts that differences between cultures inevitably lead to difficulties not only in translation but also in learning foreign languages. He reported that interference problems could arise from a lack of knowledge of either the TL or the SL. Karimi (2000) defined equivalence in translation as the process of decoding the SL text and then seeking an appropriate equivalent in the TL to encode the decoded meaning. He also noted that, due to religious, cultural, and literary factors, finding a standard equivalent from one language to another can be challenging. To achieve a satisfactory translation, he emphasized that translators must be familiar with the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, idiomatic, religious, and cultural systems of both the SL and the TL.

Abdul-Fattah and Zughoul (2003) conducted a study on EFL university learners at both undergraduate and graduate levels, aiming to assess their proficiency in rendering collocations and the strategies used in producing Arabic collocations. They specifically investigated the competence of these learners in translating the Arabic verb “kasara,” meaning “broke,” into English. The test was administered in two forms, each containing 16 lexical sequences related to the verb. The study sample consisted of two groups of EFL university students from the Department of English at Yarmouk University. Data analysis revealed that the participants’ overall performance in producing target collocations was far from satisfactory. Additionally, twelve distinct communicative strategies were identified, including avoidance, literal translation, substitution, overgeneralization, quasi-metaphorical similarity, assumed synonymy, derivativeness, imitation of literary style, idiomatic usage, paraphrasing, circumlocution, graphic ambiguity, and false TL assumption.

Bahumaid (2006) explored the procedures employed by translators when rendering equivalences and collocations with unknown TL equivalents. His study involved four Arab university instructors who taught translation and had practical translation experience. The two-part translation test included thirty sentences featuring contextualized collocations and various types of equivalence. The sentences encompassed 15 English equivalences, 11 Arabic ones, and 4 Arabic phrases. Some selected equivalences were general, such as “to make noise,” while others were tied to specific registers. The results indicated that culture-bound and register-specific equivalences posed the greatest challenge in translation, whereas equivalences with literal meanings were relatively easier to translate. Furthermore, translators employed several strategies, including providing the meanings of equivalences, using synonyms or near-synonyms, attempting literal renditions, and sometimes avoiding translation altogether.

Dweik and Abu-Shaqra (2010) investigated the challenges translators face when rendering cultural collocations in three religious texts: the Holy Quran, the Hadith, and the Bible. To achieve the study’s objectives, the researchers selected a purposive sample of 35 students enrolled in M.A. translation programs at the Universities of Petra, Yarmouk, and Jordan. They also constructed a translation test consisting of 45 contextual short sentences, randomly selected from the three religious texts, with 15 sentences assigned to each text. The researchers found that: (i) translators encountered difficulties with lexical and semantic collocations, (ii) translators of religious texts must possess a deep understanding of the nature of both lexical and metaphoric collocations, recognize the disparities between Arabic and Western concepts and beliefs, and avoid literal translation by considering context.

Building on this background, the present study aims to investigate whether the different English translations of Nahj al-Balagha exhibit the same degree of equivalence and convey the same message according to Nida’s model (1964). Additionally, it seeks to identify which of the three translations demonstrates greater dynamism and which one is more formal. The study intends to address the following research questions:

- Considering Nida’s model (1964), which translator(s) employed more dynamic equivalence and which one(s) utilized more formal equivalence?
- Is there a significant difference in the types of equivalence used by the three English translators of Nahj al-Balagha?

This research is significant as very few studies have explored the challenges Muslim translators face in translating the religious text of Nahj al-Balagha. Furthermore, this study



differs in terms of the corpus used, potentially benefiting students of translation, practicing translators, and translation instructors, while helping to fill a gap in the existing literature.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Materials and corpus*

This study examined twenty letters of the Peak of Eloquence (Nahj al-Balagha) and their translations into English by three different translators. The corpus of the study comprised letters 40 to 60 of Nahj al-Balagha in Persian and their three translations in English which were selected based on convenient sampling. English translations were selected based on their availability from three translators, namely, Askari Jafari (whose translation was published in Tehran and Islamic seminary publication and the last publication was in 2010), Morteza Motahhari (who was an Iranian cleric, philosopher, lecturer and politician and his translation of Nahj al-Balagha was published in 2013 in Qum) and Sayed Ali Reza (whose translation was published in Qum for the first time and the last publication was in 2008). Over the study, the English renditions by three translators were represented as follows, respectively:

**R1:** Mohammad Askari Jafari

**R2:** Morteza Motahhari

**R3:** Sayed Ali Reza

#### *3.2 Data collection and analysis*

As a descriptive-comparative research design, data were collected from three English translations of the letters 40 to 60 of Nahj al-Balagha. To identify types of equivalence, it was necessary to describe and classify them to build up a picture of the features of the TL in which to compare and contrast equivalents employed by translators. Accordingly, the original Persian version of the letters 40 to 60 was studied carefully. Then, three English translations of the counterpart letters were studied to compare and find the types of equivalence used in them according to Nida's (1964) model. In this vein, the three English translations were compared to see if they were concerned with the formal or dynamic equivalence. In the final phase, a chi-square test was run to see if there is a significant difference between the types of equivalence used by the translators.

#### *3.3 Framework of the study*

In the present study, Nida's equivalence model (1964) serves as the framework for the research. This model consists of two distinct types of equivalence: formal and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence emphasizes fidelity to the lexical details and grammatical structure of the original language, striving to remain as close as possible to the original text without incorporating the translator's personal ideas or interpretations. In contrast, dynamic equivalence adopts a more natural rendering, often sacrificing literal accuracy for a translation that resonates more effectively with the target audience. In other words, dynamic equivalence translates the original language "thought for thought" rather than "word for word," as is the case with formal equivalence. Additionally, according to Nida (1964), dynamic equivalence seeks to convey the message of the original text in such a way that the

response from the recipient in the TL closely mirrors that of the original audience. The goal is for readers of both languages to grasp the meaning of the text in a similar manner.

#### 4. Findings

In the following, some examples of translators' renditions of Nahj-al-balagha by Askari Jafari, Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza along with the types of equivalence used are presented and then the findings related to each example are discussed.

##### *Example 1: Letter 41*

من تو را شریک در امانتم [حکومت و زمامداری] قرار دادم و تو را صاحب اسرار خود ساختم. من از میان خاندان و خویشاوندانم مطمئن تر از تو نیافتم به خاطر مواسات یاری و ادای امانتی که در تو یافتم.

**R1:** I trusted you and appointed you on a very responsible post. I did this under the impression that from my own clan nobody will prove more sympathetic, more helpful and more trustworthy to me than you.

**R2:** I had made you a partner in my trust and my chief man. For me, no other person from my kinsmen was more trustworthy than you in the matter of sympathizing with me, assisting and respecting my trust.

**R3:** Now, I had made you a partner in my trust, and made you my chief man. And for me no other person from my kinsmen was more trustworthy than you in the matter of sympathizing with me, assisting and respecting my trusts.

Table 1. Types of Equivalence Used in the Translations of Letter 41 (D = dynamic, F = formal)

Rendition	Type of Equivalence Used
R1	D
R2	F
R3	F

As shown in Table 1, Askari Jafari employs dynamic equivalence, while the other two translators, Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza, utilize formal equivalence. Askari Jafari's translation is more reader-oriented and focuses less on minute details, resulting in a somewhat under-translation. For example, the phrase "sharik dar amanat" is rendered as a verb to enhance fluidity, and the verb "saxtam" is replaced with "appoint," even though a more literal translation would be "make." By choosing "appoint," Askari Jafari aims to convey the intended force of the verb.

In contrast, in the subsequent sentence, he prioritizes the equivalent effect of the translation, as it is translation-oriented, placing emphasis on the readership. Conversely, the translations by Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza are more detailed and author-oriented. They strive to retain both the form and content of the original text. For instance, the phrase "sharik dar amanat" is translated literally, considering its contextual meaning. Examining the following sentences reveals that both Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza consistently employ formal equivalence; they tend to over-translate and pay greater attention to the details and structure of the source text.

In summary, this example illustrates that Askari Jafari's translation is primarily reader-oriented, while the translations by Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza show a greater inclination toward the author and the source text.

*Example 2: Letter 42*

بنابراین بسوی ما حرکت کن بی آنکه مورد سوءظن یا ملامت یا متهم و یا گناهکار باشی زیرا من تصمیم گرفته ام به سوی ستمگران اهل شام حرکت کنم.

**R1:** Come to me immediately. The fact is that I have resolved to face the Syrian tyrants and oppressors.

**R2:** Therefore, proceed to me when you are neither suspected nor rebuked, neither blamed nor guilty. I have just intended to proceed towards the rebel of Syria [Mu'awiyah].

**R3:** Therefore, proceed to me while you are neither suspected nor rebuked, neither blamed nor guilty. I have just intended to proceed towards the recalcitrant of Syria.

Table 2. Types of Equivalence Used in the Translations of Letter 42 (D = dynamic, F = formal)

Rendition	Type of Equivalence Used
R1	D
R2	F
R3	F

In Table 2, the translation by Askari Jafari is based on dynamic equivalence, while the translations by Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza adhere to formal equivalence. Askari Jafari renders "besuye ma harakat kon" communicatively as "come to...", employing deletion to provide readers with a clear and natural sentence that would otherwise require presupposition regarding the reasons for any suspicion. In this context, Nida (2003) argues that the receptor needs adequate non-linguistic information to use textual cues to create semantic content. He asserts that "words only have meaning in terms of the culture of which they are a part" (Nida, 2003, p. 77).

In contrast, Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza provide a nearly literal translation, paying equal attention to both syntactic and semantic elements. They strive to adopt the closest possible structure to the SL in order to convey the contextual meanings accurately. Notably, the choice of the verb "come" by Askari Jafari, which is less formal than "proceed," may reflect the interpersonal relationship between Imam Ali and the subordinate individual.

Moreover, the term "setamgaran" is rendered differently by the three translators: as "tyrant" by Askari Jafari, "rebel" by Motahhari, and "recalcitrant" by Sayed Ali Reza. Among these options, "tyrant" appears to be the most closely aligned with its Persian counterpart. This indicates that Askari Jafari's translation is target-oriented, while Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza prioritize the source culture and author.

*Example 3: Letter 43*

به آنچه میخوری بنگر [آیا حلال است یا حرام؟]. آنگاه آنچه حلال بودنش برای تو مشتبه بود از دهان بینداز و آنچه را یقین به پاکیزگی و حلیتیش داری تناول کن.

**R1:** Look carefully into the things which you eat. If there is even a shade of their being obtained unlawfully then throw them away, only eat those things about which you are perfectly certain that they are obtained by honest means.

**R2:** Look at the morsels which you take. Leave out that about which you are in doubt and take that about which you are sure that it has been secured lawfully.

**R3:** Look at the morsels you take, leave out that about which you are in doubt and take that about which you are sure that it has been secured lawfully.

Table 3. Types of Equivalence Used in the Translations of Letter 43 (D = dynamic, F = formal)

Rendition	Type of Equivalence Used
R1	F
R2	D
R3	D

As shown in Table 3, Askari Jafari used “carefully” as a compensation for “halal va haram,” while the two other translators rendered the text similarly. Unlike in the previous example, Askari Jafari utilized redundancy and over-translation to convey the meanings, translating “halal budan” as “being obtained unlawfully.” Here, he employed a change of view strategy, as proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). Additionally, in the following sentence, the term “heliat” was transposed to “they are obtained by honest means.”

In contrast, Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza opted for under-translation, resulting in translations that are smooth, direct, and easy to read, reflecting a tendency toward the TL culture. They aim to maintain the naturalness of the original message through dynamic equivalence. In this regard, Munday (2009) asserts that full naturalness of expression is achieved only through “dynamic equivalence,” where “the message has to be tailored to the receptor’s linguistic needs and cultural expectations” (Munday, 2009, p. 42).

*Example 4: Letter 4*

بنابراین تو در مورد آنچه برایت مهم است از خدا استعانت جوی و شدت و سختگیری را با کمی نرمش درهم آمیز در آنجا که مدارا کردن بهتر است مدارا کن اما آنجائی که جز با شدت عمل کار از پیش نمی رود شدت را به کار بند.

**R1:** Seek the help of Allah in your difficulties and enterprises. In your behavior with your subjects remember that you should use leniency and tolerance alongside severity. Be kind, tolerant and lenient as far as and as long as possible but when you feel that your purpose cannot be achieved without severity only then can you adopt such an attitude.

**R2:** You should seek Allah’s help in whatever causes you anxiety. Add a little harshness to the mixture of leniency and remain lenient where leniency is more appropriate. Adopt harshness when you cannot do without harshness.

**R3:** You should seek Allah's help in whatever causes you anxiety. Add a little harshness to the mixture of leniency and remain lenient where leniency is more appropriate. Adopt harshness when you cannot do without harshness.

Table 4. Types of Equivalence Used in the Translations of Letter 44 (D = dynamic, F = formal)

Rendition	Type of Equivalence Used
R1	D
R2	F
R3	F

As seen in Table 4, translation by Askari Jafari shows tendency towards TL norms. It is semantic-oriented, and achieving equivalent effect is the focus of the translator. “*anče barayat mohem ast*” was translated as “difficulties and enterprises” which is the best possible equivalence, whereas the two other translators render it as “whatever causes you anxiety. Although it is close to the structure of the original phrase, no equivalent effect is obtained successfully in these translations. In the next translation, the phrase “in your behavior with your subjects remember” has no equivalence in the original sentence. In other words, the translator, namely, Askari Jafari with the priority of readership and following thought-process used redundancy to make implicit points more explicit. Thus, this translation is clear, smooth, natural and comprehensible to the TL readers.

On the other hand, Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza try to keep the original form and content, and hence focus on the author, which involves formal equivalence. They also try to have the exact contextual meaning of the original. Comparing the clause “use leniency and tolerance alongside severity” and “add a little harshness to the mixture of leniency”, we can recognize that the first one is more natural and comprehensible as well as reader-oriented. It creates the same response in the receptors as it does in the readers of the SL, and hence, in this translation dynamic equivalence is realized. In the next sentence rendered by Askari Jafari, the type of translation fulfilled is dynamic equivalence as well. He goes beyond the surface structure and restructure the deep ones to make the unsaid and implicit points more obvious and understandable for TL readers. Unlike Askari Jafari, Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza try to remain as close to the source text as possible and the author and SL are of paramount importance for them. In this vein, the rendered excerpt by them discloses the involved type of translation as the formal one.

#### Example 5: Letter 45

شما را به تقوا و پرهیزکاری و ترس از خداوند سفارش می کنم در پی دنیاپرستی نباشید گر چه به سراغ شما آید. بر آنچه از دنیا از دست می دهید تاسف مخورید.

**R1:** I advise you to fear Allah, do not go after this vicious world though it may try to entice you, do not seek it though it may seek you and do not grieve over and pine for things which this world refuses you.

**R2:** I admonish you (both) to fear Allah and not to hanker after the (pleasures of this) world even though it may run after you. Do not be sorry for anything of this world that you may have been denied.

**R3:** I advise you (both) to fear Allah and that you should not hanker after the (pleasures of this) world even though it may run after you. Do not be sorry for anything of this world that you have been denied.

Table 5. Types of Equivalence Used in the Translations of Letter 45 (D = dynamic, F = formal)

Rendition	Type of Equivalence Used
R1	F
R2	F
R3	F

Table 5 shows that the three translators generally approached the text in a similar manner, albeit with some slight differences. Overall, both form and content were focal points for the translators. Their main interests are oriented towards the author and the norms of the SL; however, some lexical variations are evident that warrant clarification. For instance, the terms “advise,” “admonish,” “go after,” and “hanker” illustrate these differences.

The term “admonish,” selected by Motahhari, is the most effective equivalence, as it conveys a stronger emphasis than “advise,” which was chosen by Sayed Ali Reza. Additionally, for the terms “go after” and “hanker,” Askari Jafari uses “go after,” which is less formal than “hanker.” This choice may reflect Askari Jafari's emphasis on the interpersonal relationship between Imam Ali (as) and the person addressed. Conversely, the term “hanker” is used to convey a more polite and formal tone.

In summary, despite the slight lexical differences among the translators, all produced translations that lean toward formal equivalence.

#### **Example 6: Letter 46**

[ای معاویه] از روزی بر حذر باش که هرکس سرانجام کارش را نیکو نموده شادمان می گردد و هر کس زمامش را به شیطان بسپارد و برای بازستاندن آن نکوشد سخت پشیمان می گردد.

**R1:** Therefore, you should also fear the Day of Judgement, the day when only those people who have done deeds deserving reward will be happy, and those, who have surrendered themselves to Satan and do not want to come out of its influence, will cut a sorry figure.

**R2:** Therefore, fear the Day when happy is whoever made his end happy (by good actions) while repentant is whoever allowed Satan to lead him and did not resist him.

**R3:** Therefore, fear the Day when happy is he who made his end happy (by good actions) while repentant is he who allowed Satan to lead him and did not resist him.

In Table 6, types of equivalence used in the three English translations are presented.

Table 6. Types of Equivalence Used in the Translations of Letter 46 (D = dynamic, F = formal)

Rendition	Type of Equivalence Used
R1	D
R2	F
R3	F

In this example, Askari Jafari once again presents a target-oriented translation. As shown in Table 6, he goes beyond the surface structure to uncover hidden concepts and enhance comprehension. For instance, the phrase “Day of Judgment” is not present in the original sentence but is added by the translator to aid readers' understanding. Similarly, the subsequent sentence clearly demonstrates that the focus of Askari Jafari's translation is on the target culture and readers. The phrase “cut a sorry figure” serves as the equivalent for “saxt pašiman migardand.” This idiomatic expression reflects the adaptation strategy proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), in which the equivalence-oriented translation replicates the same situation as the original while employing completely different wording.

In contrast, the other two translators maintain a balance between form and content; for example, they translate “harkas saranjamash ra niku nemud” as “whoever made his end happy.” This is a relatively literal translation that may not be sufficiently clear or comprehensible to TL readers. Furthermore, it may not evoke the same emotional response in TL readers as it does in SL readers. Alternatively, Askari Jafari renders the same clause as “those who have done deeds deserving reward will be happy,” which is clearer, smoother, and more reader-oriented.

In summary, Askari Jafari's translation can be characterized as dynamic, while the translations by Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza lean toward formal equivalence.

#### *Example 7: Letter 47*

اما بعد نماز ظهر را تا هنگامی که خورشید به اندازه طول خوابگاه گوسفندی [از نصف النهار] گذشته باشد با مردم بخوانید. و نماز عصر را هنگامی برایشان به جا آورید که خورشید هنوز کاملا زنده و قسمتی از روز باقی است به گونه ای که می توان تا غروب دو فرسخ راه را طی کرد.

**R1:** Lead the Zuhr prayer till the shadow of a wall becomes equal to the height of the wall, the Asr prayers can be performed till the sun is still bright and enough time of the day is left for a person to cover a distance of six miles.

**R2:** Offer the zuhr (noon) prayers with the people when the shade of the wall of the goats' pen is equal to the wall. Offer the asr (afternoon) prayers with them when the sun is still shining in a portion of the day enough for covering the distance of two farasangs (about six miles).

**R3:** Offer the zuhr (noon) prayers with the people when the shade of the wall of the goats' pen is equal to the wall. Offer the asr (afternoon) prayers with them when the sun is still shining in a portion of the day enough for covering the distance of two farasangs (about six miles).

Table 7. Types of Equivalence Used in the Translations of Letter 47 (D = dynamic, F = formal)

Rendition	Type of Equivalence Used
R1	D
R2	F
R3	F

As illustrated in Table 7, Askari Jafari's translation employs dynamic equivalence, prioritizing meaning over form. For instance, the phrase "tule xabgaheh gusfandi" is rendered as "the shadow of a wall." This approach indicates that the nuances of the source culture are less emphasized in his translation; however, the result is a smooth, comprehensible, and natural text. By adopting this method, Jafari effectively reduces the foreignness of the source text, making it more accessible to TL readers.

In contrast, the other two translators provide a literal rendering of the same phrase, closely adhering to the syntactic structure of the SL. This suggests that their focus lies on maintaining form and contextual meaning. An additional example is the culture-specific term "farsang," which Jafari does not include in his translation. In contrast, Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza incorporate this term, demonstrating their commitment to preserving the source culture.

In conclusion, Jafari's translation can be characterized as dynamic, while the translations by Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza are more formal.

#### *Example 8: Letter 48*

اما بعد شما می دانید گر چه کتمان می کنید که من به دنبال مردم نرفتم آنها به سراغ من آمدند . من دست بیعت را به سوی آنان ننگشودم آنها با اصرار زیاد با من بیعت کردند.

**R1:** You may try as much as you like to hide the fact and to draw a curtain over it but both of you know very well that I did not approach the people to get their oath of allegiance but they came to me with their desire to make me their Amir (ruler). I did not extend my hands towards them so that they might swear the oath of allegiance to me but they themselves extended their hands towards me.

**R2:** You both know, though you conceal it, that I did not approach the people before they approached me, and I did not ask them to swear the oath of allegiance to me till they themselves swore the oath of allegiance to me.

**R3:** Now, both of you know, although you conceal it, that I did not approach the people till they approached me, and I did not ask them to swear allegiance to me till they themselves swore allegiance to me, and both of you were among those who approached me and swore me allegiance.

As indicated in Table 8, Askari Jafari once again favors the TL and its culture, demonstrating a lack of loyalty to the author and the source culture. He employs domestication to prioritize the needs of the readership. Signs of this approach include the use of redundancy and additional explanations, further emphasizing that TL readers are his primary concern. For example, the clause "garche ketman mikonid" is transformed into the



compound sentence: “You may try as much as you like to hide the fact and to draw a curtain over it,” thereby making implicit meanings more explicit.

Table 8. Types of Equivalence Used in the Translations of Letter 48 (D = dynamic, F = formal)

Rendition	Type of Equivalence Used
R1	D
R2	F
R3	F

Moreover, Jafari aims to elicit the same response from TL readers as that experienced by SL readers. Nida (1964) posits that a translation is successful when it achieves an equivalent response, suggesting that correspondence in meaning should take precedence over correspondence in style (cited in Munday, 2001).

In contrast, Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza adhere closely to the structure of the source text, focusing on transferring contextual meanings. Their translation process places a higher priority on maintaining the syntactic structure and staying true to the author’s original intent.

## 5. Discussion

This study aimed to determine which Persian-to-English translations by Askari Jafari, Motahhari, and Sayed Ali Reza are more dynamic and which are more formal, based on Nida’s model (1964). It also sought to explore any significant differences among the translations produced by these three translators. To this end, twenty letters from Nahj al-Balagha were conveniently selected as the corpus for the study. The three English translations and their Persian counterparts were compiled, and Nida’s model of formal and dynamic equivalence was applied to identify the type of equivalence used in each translation. To address the first research question, data on the frequency and percentage of the types of equivalence utilized were presented, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Frequency and Percentage of the Types of Equivalence in the Renditions by Askari Jafari (R1), Motahhari (R2) and Sayed Ali Reza (R3)

Rendition	Formal Equivalence		Dynamic Equivalence	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
R1	6	10	54	90
R2	51	85	9	15
R3	53	88	7	11

Based on the findings, there are a total of sixty instances of formal and dynamic equivalences across the three translations. As indicated in Table 9, the frequency of formal equivalence used by Askari Jafari is only six out of the sixty cases, while ninety percent of his translations are grounded in dynamic equivalence. In contrast, Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza show a preference for formal equivalence over dynamic equivalence. Specifically, eighty-five percent of the texts rendered by Motahhari and eighty-eight percent of those by Sayed Ali Reza rely on formal equivalence. The percentages of dynamic equivalence in their translations are only fifteen percent for Motahhari and eleven percent for Sayed Ali Reza. Consequently, the frequency of dynamic equivalence-based translations by Askari Jafari significantly surpasses that of Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza. Conversely, the instances of

formal equivalence-based translations by Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza exceed those produced by Askari Jafari.

This indicates that Askari Jafari prioritizes TL readers and culture in his translations. In this regard, Nida (1964) states that “a translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture” (p. 159). Moreover, Askari Jafari tends to favor TL items that are more culturally appropriate for obscure original items, making linguistically implicit original information explicit and incorporating a degree of redundancy to facilitate comprehension.

Further analysis reveals differences between the translators concerning their use of formal versus dynamic equivalence, considering both SL-oriented and TL-oriented translation approaches. Dynamic equivalence-based translations by Askari Jafari surpass the same type of translations by Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza. Conversely, the frequencies of formal equivalence-based translations by Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza exceed those produced by Askari Jafari. To address the second research question regarding the significance of differences in the types of equivalence among the three translations, a chi-square test was conducted. The results of the chi-square test are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Results of chi-square test for the types of equivalence used in the three English translations of Nahj al-Balagha

Chi-square	Df	Sig.
86.49	1	0.00

As shown in Table 10, the significance level at 0.05 is 0.00, which means there is a significant difference between the types of equivalence used by the three translators in the study.

## 6. Conclusion

Finding equivalence, especially in religious texts, can pose significant challenges for translators. In this context, conceptual strategies become essential for effective translation. Several key points must be considered by translators. First, the type of text is crucial. Translators should then assess how the type of text relates to the type of equivalence they aim to produce. They must also evaluate whether the translation can convey the same message as the SL. Additionally, translators should determine the strategies they will utilize to find the best equivalence that accurately conveys the intended message of the source text. Furthermore, the translation should be faithful, direct, natural, and comprehensible, making it clear whether the approach taken is formal or dynamic.

Based on the findings, while translating religious texts in general—and Nahj al-Balagha in particular—presents considerable challenges, it is not entirely impossible. Although some semantic and stylistic loss may occur, effective translations can still be achieved. Askari Jafari’s translation is clear, smooth, natural, and comprehensible to TL readers, while Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza strive to retain the original form and content. In other words, Askari Jafari’s reader-oriented approach is dynamic, whereas Motahhari and Sayed Ali Reza’s translations lean more toward the author and source text, making them more formal. Additionally, there was a significant difference in the types of equivalence employed by the three translators.

This study could be valuable for teachers, translation students, translators, syllabus designers, book compilers, and policymakers. Teachers can expand their understanding of religious texts and familiarize themselves with various cultural aspects. Translation students can gain insight into the different aspects of formal and dynamic equivalence. Policymakers can explore significant religious texts and assess them using various frameworks.

One major limitation of this study was the restricted size of the corpus. The results could have been more reliable if the research had included a broader selection of letters from Nahj al-Balagha. However, increasing the size and length of the study would have required more time, which posed another limitation in completing the research within a reasonable timeframe. A longer study could also incur additional expenses, further complicating timely completion. This study employed Nida's (1964) model as its framework; future research could utilize different frameworks. Additionally, data from other relevant scriptures, such as the Holy Qur'ān, the Old Testament, or the New Testament, could be collected, sorted, and analyzed. Furthermore, working on religious projects requires careful attention to avoid writing anything that may disturb followers of a particular religious group or provoke strong opposition. Researchers must maintain impartiality and refrain from favoring one side in any argument. In this context, some translators may choose to remain loyal to the SL content to avoid potential conflicts. It is advisable for researchers in this field to conduct further studies on other chapters of the Noble Qur'ān to complement the findings of this research and enhance the quality of future translations of religious texts.

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## Examining the Theorization Potential of Chat GPT-4 in Cultural Turn Theories of Translation Studies: A Focus on Qur'anic Cultural Elements

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The Holy Qur'an.

### ABSTRACT

The extensive training data of ChatGPT has facilitated theorizing in the field of Translation Studies, particularly during the cultural turn. Following this theorizing, a standardization framework was proposed. This study employed a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach, utilizing a descriptive method to interpret the data. The validated questions were based on the works of theorists associated with the cultural turn. Two scholars participated in structured and semi-structured interviews, employing a three-point Likert scale to capture their opinions on the proposed theory. Data analysis focused on the accuracy of ChatGPT-4's responses in relation to the scholars' opinions and references. The findings associated with the Likert scale were linked to task-oriented benchmarks, including factual/contextual understanding, coherence, and resolution of ambiguity. The results indicated a 29.3% weakness in ChatGPT-4's data analysis. The resolution of ambiguity resulted in a total of neutral responses at 44.8%. Scholars unanimously endorsed the cultural interaction theory, demonstrating a 100% capacity for theorizing by ChatGPT-4. In terms of coherence and summarization, the data suggested a stronger correlation with prompt engineering. The potential for theorizing concerning existing theory was found to be 77.7%, while the standard of theorizing by ChatGPT-4 was assessed at 68.9%. Surah Al-Fatiha was selected to exemplify cultural translation according to CIT, illustrating the theory's effectiveness in translating cultural-ideological texts. A comparison of ChatGPT-4's translations with those of six Quranic translators underscored its synthesizing abilities, with the incorporation of cultural interaction theory into prompts significantly enhancing its translation skills.

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## 1. Introduction

The scientific revolution gave rise to the contemporary academic idea of theory, especially in the natural sciences. The word *theory* is relatively new in English, originating in the 16th century (Tymoczko, 2013). Graham (1981) claimed that a comprehensive translation theory necessitates a formal investigation into the fundamental principles that determine an object and establish a method of analysis. In addition, a thorough theory of translation should also encompass a practical assessment process.

The general theory of translation is concerned with the foundational aspects of translation that are applicable across various modes and genres, encompassing written and oral forms, as well as diverse contexts such as scientific, technical, political, and artistic domains, among others, irrespective of language pairings (Dildorbekovna, 2022).

The theory of translation is typically categorized into three main areas: general, special, and particular theories. General translation theory focuses on the fundamental principles and concepts that underpin all types of translation, regardless of their specific characteristics. This encompasses written and oral translations, as well as various subtypes such as simultaneous, consecutive, one-sided, two-sided, scientific, technical, official, military, socio-political, artistic, cinematographic, and more. Recent studies, as noted by Liu et al. (2023), have seen a surge in articles discussing ChatGPT. The distribution of ChatGPT papers across different fields reveals that computational and language studies have been the most prominent areas of focus. Notable advancements in ChatGPT include large-scale pre-training, instruction-based fine-tuning, and reinforcement learning from human feedback. These advancements have enabled ChatGPT to be applied across numerous domains, including education, healthcare, reasoning, text generation, and scientific research. Liu et al. (2023) also highlighted future perspectives for ChatGPT, emphasizing the need for further exploration of its functionality, potential impacts, ethical considerations, and upcoming developments. The growing adoption of ChatGPT in research is evident in its use for creating various forms of text, such as phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. This trend has led to a proliferation of studies examining the potential applications and implications of ChatGPT's text-generating capabilities.

Research suggests that ChatGPT can enhance motion recognition by automating label generation, accurately translating natural language, and effectively summarizing content. ChatGPT demonstrates particular proficiency in simplifying complex medical documents and constructing logical schedules. However, it may not always outperform specialized models in certain tasks. Additionally, concerns persist regarding its reliability, originality, and ability to generate genuinely new material without significant human involvement (Liu et al., 2023).

Existing research in translation studies primarily focuses on ChatGPT's role as a translation tool or the ethical implications of AI in academic research. Sohail et al. (2023) summarized previous studies on ChatGPT centralization and conducted their own research exploring its future potential. Their work emphasized the possibility of using AI to assist in the theorizing process or even develop theories independently. They also highlighted the untapped capabilities of ChatGPT-4. The researchers aimed to elevate ChatGPT's status within the field, demonstrating its potential for theoretical contributions. To achieve this, they developed a standardization framework for theorizing with ChatGPT-4. This framework revealed the AI's capacity to theorize, encouraging further exploration of its capabilities by other researchers. The study delved into the cultural turn theory within

translation studies, identifying key concepts. Subsequently, the researchers proposed a standardized framework to evaluate ChatGPT-4's theorizing process. Through this research, they provided insights into standardization and the methods of generating new theories using AI.

## **2. Literature review**

ChatGPT was specifically evaluated for its potential in managing and treating salivary gland disorders and sial endoscopy. The results demonstrated its promising capabilities in this area. However, as noted, it is essential to continue developing and refining these tools to ensure their reliability, safety, and effective clinical application (Chiesa-Estomba et al., 2023). The study's findings highlight ChatGPT's advancement from a machine-generated translator to an AI chatbot with positive potential for improving patient care.

ChatGPT-3's performance in introductory mechanics topics is rapidly approaching that of an expert physicist. Following the completion of their research, the authors became aware of Ref1, a previous publication that extensively analyzed ChatGPT-3.5's capabilities in a physics class, including a modified version of the FCI (West, 2023). West (2023) confirmed portions of their findings and extended the analysis to ChatGPT-3, demonstrating significant improvements in most areas. These results suggest that ChatGPT has the potential to respond in a manner indistinguishable from a human expert in the field of science. Lee (2023) explored the implications of this development on communication and the roles of language professionals, proposing a new approach that expands the boundaries of traditional translation. Lee advocates for a post-humanist perspective on translation, encouraging a broader view of skills, methods, and media in leveraging artificial intelligence as an extension of translators' abilities. These findings signal a new era in translation studies, potentially extending to a post-humanist approach to theorizing.

Theory evaluation in general concepts often centers on 'falsifiability', as proposed by Bacharach (1989). Falsifiability suggests that theories should be formulated in a way that allows for empirical testing and potential refutation. Bacharach also emphasized the importance of 'utility' as a bridge between theory and research. In this study, examples from the Holy Qur'an are used to illustrate the translation strategies based on the proposed theory, connecting theory to the research field. The falsifiability of the proposed theory was evaluated against existing theories within the cultural turn framework. To link the proposed theory to its practical scope, the six translations of Surah Al-Fatiha were selected for comparison based on their translation strategies. The Holy Qur'an contains various cultural elements that can be considered manifestations of cultural translation.

ChatGPT demonstrated potential in translating the Holy Qur'an, achieving relatively high METEOR scores (0.72 average, 0.89 compared to Thomas Irving's translation) but lower BLEU scores (0.69), suggesting room for improvement in word correspondence. The primary goal of the study was to explore the capabilities of machine learning tools like ChatGPT, rather than to evaluate the BLEU and METEOR metrics themselves. While these tools can enhance translations, human oversight remains crucial for ensuring accuracy and preserving the scripture's message (Dahia & Belbacha, 2024).

Table 1. The six translations of Al-Fatiha Surah (Hassan Zadeh et al., 2018)

Ali's Translation	Arberry's Translation	Pickthall's Translation	Saheeh's Translation	Sarwar's Translation	Shakir's Translation
<p>1. In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful</p> <p>2. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds;</p> <p>3. Most Gracious, Most Merciful;</p> <p>4. Master of the Day of Judgment.</p> <p>5. Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek.</p> <p>6. Show us the straightway,</p> <p>7. The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.</p>	<p>1. In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate</p> <p>2. Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being,</p> <p>3. the All-merciful, the All-compassionate,</p> <p>4. The Master of the Day of Doom.</p> <p>5. Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succour.</p> <p>6. Guide us in the straight path,</p> <p>7. The path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those against whom Thou art wrathful, nor of those who are astray.</p>	<p>1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful</p> <p>2. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,</p> <p>3. The Beneficent, the Merciful</p> <p>4. Master of the Day of Judgment,</p> <p>5. Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help.</p> <p>6. Show us the straight path,</p> <p>7. The path of those whom Thou hast favoured; Not the (path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.</p>	<p>1. In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.</p> <p>2. [All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds.</p> <p>3. The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful,</p> <p>4. Sovereign of the Day of Recompense</p> <p>5. It is You we worship and You we ask for help.</p> <p>6. Guide us to the straight path –</p> <p>7. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.</p>	<p>1. In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.</p> <p>2. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Universe,</p> <p>3. the Beneficent, the Merciful</p> <p>4. and Master of the Day of Judgment</p> <p>5. (Lord), You alone We do worship and from You alone we do seek assistance</p> <p>6. (Lord), guide us to the right path,</p> <p>7. the path of those to whom You have granted blessings, those who are neither subject to (Your) anger nor have gone astray</p>	<p>1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.</p> <p>2. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.</p> <p>3. The Beneficent, the Merciful.</p> <p>4. Master of the Day of Judgment.</p> <p>5. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help.</p> <p>6. Keep us on the right path.</p> <p>7. The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favors. Not (the path) of those upon whom Thy wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray.</p>



Humans have limitations, while artificial intelligence (ChatGPT-4) can complement human capabilities to mitigate these constraints. Although artificial neurons operate at a much faster pace, they have fewer connections compared to biological neurons. Conversely, artificial neural networks are generally larger in scale but require significantly more power and time to process and recognize scenes than the human brain. AI agents can perform deductive and inductive reasoning but cannot engage in abductive (imaginative) reasoning (Tecuci, 2024). Therefore, AI agents can assist humans in overcoming their limitations, such as time constraints, while humans can contribute their ability to judge based on data and achieve a presumed goal.

### 3. Methodology

This interdisciplinary research explored the potential of AI chatbots, particularly ChatGPT4, for theorizing within translation studies. It focused on cultural theories and employed descriptive methods. The researcher used a three-phase approach to validate the proposed theory:

- **Theoretical Comparison:** The theory was compared to concepts from cultural turn theories in Translation Studies.
- **Task-Oriented Benchmarks:** ChatGPT4's performance was evaluated on tasks related to the proposed theory. Its ability to respond and achieve better qualitative outcomes was assessed using a 3-point Likert scale.
- **Expert Validation:** Translation studies scholars rated the proposed theory and thesis abstract using a 3-point Likert scale.

This structured three-phase approach provided a comprehensive evaluation of the theory's effectiveness. It also proposed a framework for standardizing AI chatbot theorizing. Finally, the researcher detailed the strategies and procedures used throughout the project to answer the fourth research question. The third phase served as a bridge between the first two phases, connecting them.

#### 3.1. Theoretical framework

The accuracy of ChatGPT4's responses to Ray's (2023) work was assessed using a 3-point Likert scale (Acceptable, Neutral, Unacceptable). Acceptable answers to all sections (factual/contextual understanding, proposed theory, and its relation to cultural turn theories) were considered accurate.

The validated questions focused on factual understanding, ambiguity resolution, and coherence. A high percentage of neutral responses indicated ambiguity in ChatGPT4's answers. Bassnett (2002) and Munday et al. (2016) were used to evaluate ChatGPT4's

responses to cultural turn concepts, while Jaakkola (2020) and As-Safi (2011) were used to assess the proposed theory in general terms.

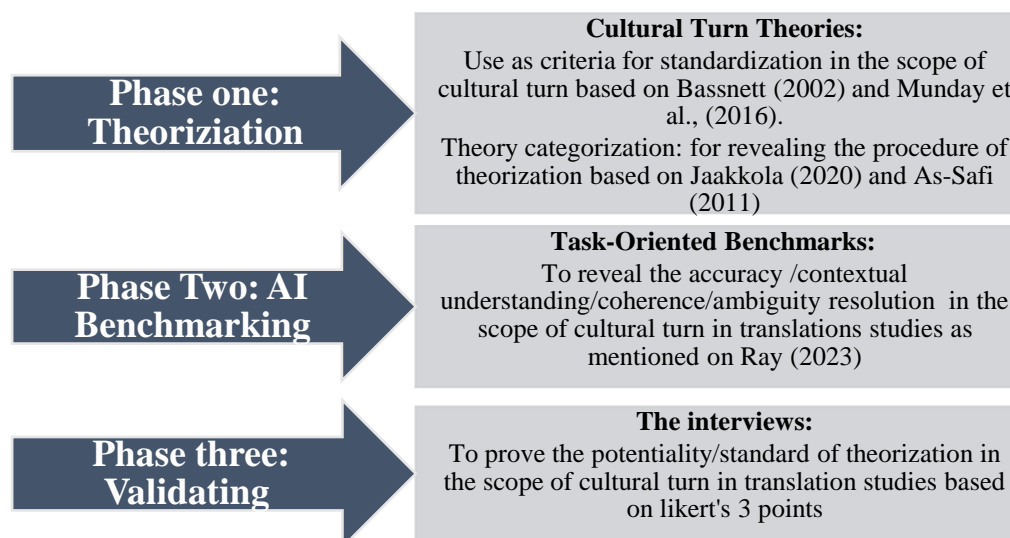


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

### 3.2. Data collection procedures

To address the proposed topic, the following research questions were formulated:

- How can the theorizing potential of ChatGPT4 in cultural theories within translation studies be standardized?
- How standardized is ChatGPT4's theorizing in cultural turn with respect to existing theories?
- Do translation studies scholars approve of the theorizing potential of ChatGPT4 in cultural theories within translation studies?
- What strategies and procedures can ChatGPT4 use to theorize in the cultural turn area about existing theories?

✓ **Question Development:** Questions were designed based on key works in Translation Studies, such as Bassnett (2002) and other cultural turn theorists, and validated by scholars.

✓ **AI Engagement:** Interactions with ChatGPT-4 were conducted using the validated questions, focusing on theories related to the cultural turn.

✓ **Theory Standardization:** Specific questions were posed to standardize theories around cultural turn discussions within AI interactions, and relevant references were sourced from literature. A Likert scale was used to connect scholars' evaluations to task-oriented benchmarks (factual/contextual understanding, coherence, and ambiguity resolution).

✓ **Data Recording:** AI responses were documented and supplemented with scientific literature for comparison.

✓ **Evidence Assessment:** ChatGPT-4's responses were assessed against existing scholarship to evaluate its theorization capacity (Bassnett, 2002; Munday et al., 2016).

✓ **Expert Feedback:** The research data, along with an abstract and validated questions, were shared with two Translation Studies scholars for semi-structured interviews. A three-point Likert scale was used to evaluate theorization potential, and the scholars also provided additional feedback.

✓ **Conclusion Formation:** Final conclusions regarding ChatGPT-4's theorization capabilities in Translation Studies were drawn by the researcher and supervisors.

### *3.2. Data analysis procedures*

The analysis of the first research question involved integrating references from cultural turn theories into the proposed theory, with its strengths and weaknesses identified through expert feedback. For the second research question, the proposed theory was compared with Jaakkola's (2020) theory categories, aligned with As-Safi's (2011) translation types, and evaluated against Bell's model for theorization. To assess the theorization process by ChatGPT-4, an accuracy-based method was employed, evaluating the standardization of the proposed theory with expert feedback used to calculate the ratio of acceptable versus neutral responses. Feedback from Translation Studies scholars was gathered for the third research question through various interview formats: a structured interview with Scholar No. 1, a semi-structured interview on the proposed theory with Scholar No. 3, and an unstructured interview on theorization procedures with Scholar No. 2. Scholar No. 1's insights were crucial for verifying coherence in the summarized findings, which aligned with three-point Likert scale responses. The final step involved systematically comparing the proposed theory with existing frameworks to clarify theorization steps. The methodologies from the first three questions informed the last question, which included an unstructured interview with Scholar No. 2 to refine strategies and procedures for theorization by ChatGPT-4.

## **4. Data analysis**

Due to its efficiency and better performance in the researcher's region, the Telegram AI Chatbot (ChatGPT-4) was used for data gathering. Integrating OpenAI's ChatGPT with a Telegram chatbot offers an effective tool for accessing diverse information. The chatbot enables smooth user interactions, reducing errors and enhancing engagement. Its intuitive design allows for quick information retrieval, making it especially useful for prospective students seeking details about Semarang State Polytechnic. This technology significantly improves the ease and efficiency of obtaining information (Avisyah et al., 2023). For Bassnett (2002, pp.44-45):

The purpose of translation theory, then, is to reach an understanding of the processes undertaken in the act of translation and, not, as is so commonly misunderstood, to provide a set of norms for effecting the perfect translation"

The proposed theory by Chat GPT4 ‘cultural interaction theory’:

Translators play a crucial role as cultural intermediaries in the exchange of information, values, and cultural attitudes between languages and cultures. This theory highlights the importance of translators possessing cultural and linguistic awareness, as well as the ability to deeply understand and accurately convey the meaning and concepts of the original text. Furthermore, it emphasizes the need for translators to be sensitive to and proficient in expressing cultural and linguistic differences in their translations. By encouraging creative adaptation and integration of diverse cultural and linguistic elements, this theory promotes a dynamic and interactive approach to translation that facilitates effective communication between languages and cultures. In essence, the theory of ‘translation as cultural interaction’ underscores the translator's role in mediating cultural exchange and promoting mutual understanding through the translation process.

The theory of ‘translation as cultural interaction’ posits that translators function as cultural mediators, facilitating the transfer of information, values, and cultural attitudes between languages and cultures during the translation process. Within this framework, the translator’s role as a cultural intermediary in the exchange and transmission of cultural and linguistic elements is paramount. This theory underscores the importance of translators possessing cultural and linguistic awareness, enabling them to grasp the nuances of concepts and values inherent in all languages and cultures, including knowledge of language structures, terminologies, symbols, and cultural attitudes. The translator’s role involves understanding the original text's meaning and essence and faithfully conveying it accurately in the target language. The theory underscores the importance of acknowledging and managing cultural and linguistic differences between languages and cultures, advocating for translators to demonstrate sensitivity in articulating these variances effectively in their translations. This includes skillfully translating terms, idiomatic expressions, and cultural concepts specific to the target language, necessitating the translator to use inventive techniques to adjust and blend various cultural and linguistic elements. Essentially, the theory of ‘translation as cultural interaction’ highlights the translator’s function as a cultural mediator who can proficiently convey values, concepts, and cultural attitudes during the translation process, enabling a more profound insight into how translation functions as an interactive and mutually influential process between languages and cultures.

The theory of ‘translation as cultural interaction’ provides a multifaceted perspective that can be examined from different angles.

**Linguistic Dimension:** Within this dimension, the theory underscores linguistic disparities and variations as integral components of cultural interaction in translation. Translators are responsible for accurately communicating linguistic structures, terms, symbols, and cultural attitudes in the target language. This includes translating language-specific terms and combinations that are unique to the target language.

**Cultural Dimension:** This dimension underscores the importance of cultural differences and diversities as key elements in cultural interaction during translation.

Translators need to demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to cultural variations between languages and cultures, effectively conveying these distinctions in their translations. This involves the translation of cultural values, concepts, and attitudes that are embedded in the target language.

**Social Dimension:** Focusing on social interactions between languages and cultures, this dimension emphasizes the significance of social factors in each language and culture. Translators are encouraged to consider and incorporate these social aspects effectively in their translations, including habits, customs, and social interactions specific to the target language.

**Historical Dimension:** Within this dimension, the theory underscores the historical impacts and exchanges among languages and cultures. Translators are encouraged to consider the historical evolutions and transformations that have influenced languages and cultures throughout history, integrating these historical dynamics thoughtfully into their translations. This includes the translation of historical terms and concepts found in the target language.

These aspects are just a small part of the various elements that can be explored within the theory of "translation as cultural interaction." Due to the intricate and multi-faceted aspects of cultures and languages, this theory can be further analyzed through additional dimensions to offer a thorough comprehension of the intricacies of cultural interaction in translation.

Previously, the focus in translation studies was primarily on comparing the original text with its translated version, often to identify what was 'lost' or 'betrayed' during the translation process. However, a new approach emerged that aimed to understand the shifts in emphasis occurring when texts were transferred between different literary systems (Bassnett, 2002, pp.8-9) Chat GPT4 mentioned: "The theory underscores the importance of acknowledging and managing cultural and linguistic differences between languages and cultures, advocating for translators to demonstrate sensitivity in articulating these variances effectively in their translations". So, matches with the centralization of the new research approach.

Historically, the study of history has offered a dynamic and practical framework for explaining shifts in literary history, with translations playing a pivotal role. Within Polysystem theory, the historical dimension has helped scholars describe and justify the roles and significance of translations across various cultures and time periods, while also identifying translation norms shaped by historical contexts (Dimitriu, 2015). Thus, the concept of history is integral to existing cultural turn theories, contributing to a deeper understanding of the cultural and temporal influences on translation practices.

Culture and language are situated within specific temporal and spatial contexts. Different periods should be seen as distinct cultures or languages when their structural variances become significant for a particular context (Reiss, Nord, Vermeer, 2014, p. 27). Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT) mentioned the inner relationship between culture and language correctly as explaining the translating a text process from The Cultural Interaction Theory's perspective "By encouraging creative adaptation and integration of diverse cultural and linguistic elements, this theory promotes a dynamic and interactive approach to translation that facilitates effective communication between languages and cultures" (Chat GPT4).

Bassnett emphasized the connection between culture and society, stating, “If culture is perceived as dynamic, then the terminology of social structuring must be dynamic also” (Bassnett, 2002, p. 41). This highlights an intrinsic relationship between cultural terminology and social structuring within a given context. Similarly, in Cultural Interaction Theory, both a social and a cultural dimension are present, reflecting the intertwined nature of cultural and societal dynamics.

Individuals acquire specific cultural beliefs through socialization, and personal views can either challenge or affirm societal norms. These beliefs may also reflect different perceptions of reality that deviate from the norm. Additionally, language can preserve outdated traditions, highlighting the contrast between evolving cultural practices and traditional expressions. Cultural and individual differences in value systems further underscore the diversity in how societies and people interpret and uphold beliefs (Reiss et al., 2014, p. 23). Cultural Interaction Theory mentions the role of the individual (Translator) in shaping the culture “highlights the translator's function as a cultural mediator who can proficiently convey values, concepts, and cultural attitudes during the translation process, enabling a more profound insight into how translation functions as an interactive and mutually influential process between languages and cultures” (Chat GPT4).

If culture is understood as dynamic, the language used to describe social structures must also be fluid and adaptable (Bassnett, 2002, p. 41). This dynamic quality of culture is highlighted in the concept of cultural dimensions:

This dimension underscores the importance of cultural differences and diversities as key elements in cultural interaction during translation. Translators need to demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to cultural variations between languages and cultures, effectively conveying these distinctions in their translations. This involves the translation of cultural values, concepts, and attitudes that are embedded in the target language (Chat GPT4).

The process of translation involves a series of linguistic transfers from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) about the meaning of discourse and other representational content elements of discourse role exchange (Bassnett, 2002, p. 128):

The translator is seen as a liberator, someone who frees the text from the fixed signs of its original shape making it no longer subordinate to the source text but visibly endeavoring to bridge the space between the source author and text and the eventual target language readership (Bassnett, 2002, p.6).

Cultural Interaction Theory mentioned the translation process as “translators possessing cultural and linguistic awareness, enabling them to grasp the nuances of concepts and values inherent in all languages and cultures, including knowledge of language structures, terminologies, symbols, and cultural attitudes. The translator's role involves understanding the original text's meaning and essence and faithfully conveying it accurately in the target language. The theory underscores the importance of acknowledging and managing cultural and linguistic differences between languages and cultures, advocating for translators to demonstrate sensitivity in articulating these variances effectively in their translations” (Chat GPT4).

Chat GPT4 describes the ‘translation types’ as:

The translation types section demonstrates the different types of translation based on the Cultural Interaction theory. These include:

**1. Direct Translation:** Where the translator aims to convey the source text’s linguistic and cultural elements as faithfully as possible to the target audience.

**2. Indirect Translation:** In this type of translation, the translator adapts the source text’s cultural elements to make them more understandable or acceptable to the target audience while still retaining the essence of the source culture.

**2.1. Invisible Translation:** Where the translator fully integrates the source text’s cultural elements into the target culture, translating appears as if it originated in the target culture

The different types of translation based on the cultural interaction theory mentioned, cultural interaction has two main branches: direct translation and indirect translation, and indirect translation further branches into invisible translation and adapted translation. Chat GPT4 proposed types of translation based on cultural interaction theory. CIT ignored the various translation types.

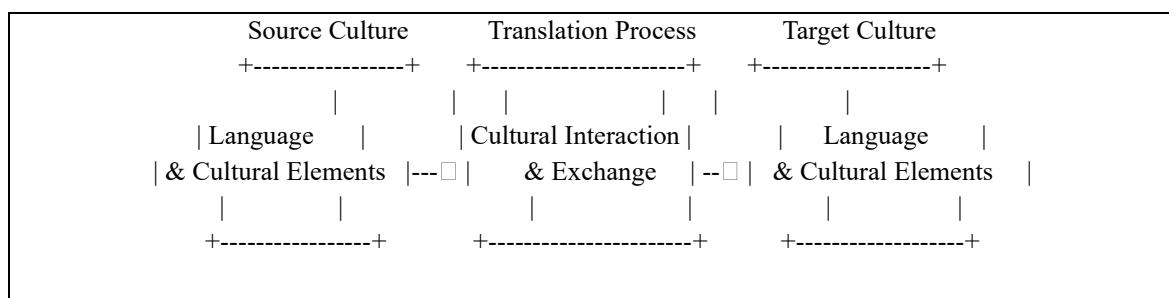


Figure 2. Chat GPT4’s cultural interaction theory processes

As illustrated in Figure 2, the source culture represents the original language and cultural elements of the source text. The translation process involves cultural interaction and exchange, where the translator mediates between the source and target cultures. This process includes not only linguistic transfer but also a deep understanding of cultural context and the exchange of cultural elements. The target culture represents the language and cultural elements of the translated text as it is received and understood (Chat GPT4). Central to the cultural interaction theory is the translator’s cultural perspective and the decisions made regarding the transfer of cultural elements. The translator’s culture can influence how cultural elements are modified in the translated text. To evaluate a text using this theory, it’s essential to consider the translator’s cultural background and the choices made in transferring cultural elements

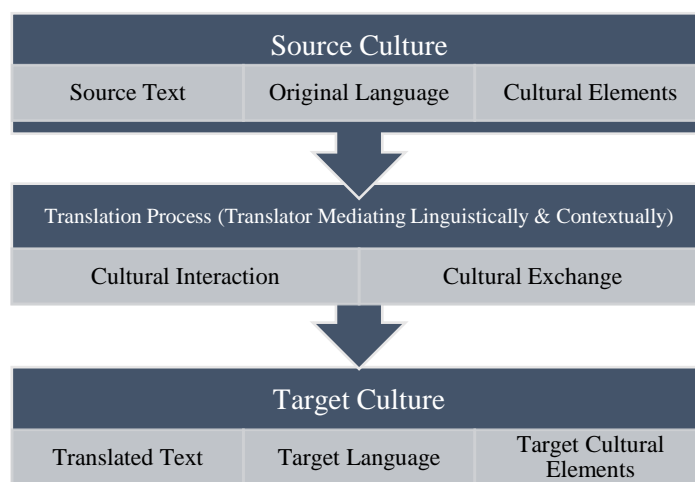


Figure 3. Proposed process for cultural interaction theory: a visual overview

The translation process consists of three phases based on Cultural Interaction Theory. In the first phase, the properties of the source culture are identified, including the characteristics of the source text, the language of the source text, and the cultural elements inherent in the source text. In the second phase, cultural interactions occur during translation, involving engagement with the three properties of the source culture: the source text properties, the source language properties, and the cultural elements of the source culture. The translator mediates these properties with the corresponding properties of the target culture, which include the target text properties, the target language properties, and the cultural elements of the target culture. The outcome of these interactions between the source text and the cultures involved is a translated text that either preserves and conveys the cultural elements of the source language and culture or adapts them to fit the target language and culture. The translation process is influenced by the translator's choices regarding substitutions of cultural and linguistic elements from the source text. Ultimately, the relationship between the source culture and the target culture is reflected in the translator's decisions regarding these substitutions.

This section explores the contextual understanding of Chat GPT4 within Translation Studies, focusing on the cultural turn and gender perspectives. Gender in Translation Studies investigates how gender roles, identities, and power dynamics influence translation practices and outcomes. By considering gender perspectives, this field aims to promote gender equality and representation in translation (Chat GPT4). Feminist translation theory highlights the connection between the marginalized status of translation and that of women in society and literature. This theory critiques societal norms that place women and translation at lower rungs of recognition. Instead of focusing solely on fidelity to the original author or reader, feminist translation theory emphasizes the writing process itself, involving both the writer and translator (Munday et al., 2016, pp. 205-207).

The Cultural Turn in Translation Studies has shifted attention toward the cultural aspects of translation, emphasizing the importance of culture in shaping translation practices and outcomes. Bassnett highlighted that cultural turn theories within Translation Studies go beyond language and linguistics to encompass broader cultural, historical, political, and social factors. Translation is viewed not only as a linguistic process but also as a cultural one, influenced by ideologies, power relations, and cultural norms (Bassnet, 2002, pp. 4-8). This example illustrates the dynamic nature of culture and its connection to social structure, the role of the translator, and various concepts of culture:



The Cultural Interaction Theory in translation studies involves evaluating how translators address the interconnectedness of languages and cultures, cultural context, sensitivity to cultural nuances, the dynamic nature of cultures, promotion of cultural diversity, and power dynamics within a translation text. This evaluation helps assess how well the translator engages with these aspects and embodies an understanding of the complex relationship between language and culture. Power dynamics in cultural interaction theory refer to the unequal distribution of influence among different cultural groups, impacting representation in translation and communication. The dynamic nature of culture in this theory highlights those cultures are constantly evolving, influenced by various factors like globalization and social change, emphasizing the importance of intercultural communication, cultural sensitivity, and awareness of power dynamics in cultural interactions for accurate and respectful representations of diverse cultures (Chat GPT4).

The translators' roles as mediators and power dynamics were also explored. Historical context plays a vital role in understanding the development of translations and their significance in different cultures. Poly-system theory and ideological viewpoints have added depth to the field by shedding light on translation norms, power dynamics, and the establishment of text canons (Dimitriu, 2015).

Translation Studies have been experiencing significant developments with a shift towards a more inclusive and diverse perspective that considers power dynamics, cultural inequalities, and the impact of colonial histories on translation practices. The field has evolved beyond Eurocentric views, emphasizing the agency of translators in cross-cultural exchanges. This evolution has been shaped by influential scholars and a growing intersection with disciplines such as post-colonial theory, corpus linguistics, and gender studies, emphasizing the transformative role of translation in shaping meaning across cultures and periods (Bassnett, 2002, pp. 6-11).

Bell's (1991) model of translation as a product of theory, as cited in As-Safi (2011), posits that a theory serves to explain a phenomenon by identifying systematic patterns within a given subject. Through careful observation and empirical evidence, a theory can be elaborated and ultimately lead to the development of a model (p. 48).

If the Cultural Interaction theory aligns with these characteristics of Bell's model, the 'phenomena' under investigation could be the linguistic components that reflect cultural elements and the transfer of information, values, and attitudes between languages and cultures during translation. 'The data' would consist of all cultural reference terms, idiomatic expressions, and specific cultural concepts collected by the human researcher.

The 'cohesive characteristics explained' by these theories would include those proposed by theorists who preceded the cultural turn. Given that AI chatbots like ChatGPT4 synthesize existing knowledge, they can assist human agents in synthesizing data. A human researcher could propose a model for translating based on the Cultural Interaction Theory by analyzing the extracted data from ChatGPT4 regarding translation strategies. To adapt Bell's model and propose steps for translating based on the Cultural Interaction Theory, the theory itself should offer a model or strategy for translating text. The concepts of cultural interaction theory mentioned by ChatGPT4 include:

Cultural Interaction Theory in translation studies examines how cultural factors influence the translation process and the resulting text. Here are some key aspects of this theory as it applies to translation:

1. **Cultural Context:** Translation is not just about converting words from one language to another; it involves understanding the cultural context of both the source and target languages. Cultural nuances, idioms, and references must be considered to convey the intended meaning accurately.
2. **Intercultural Communication:** Effective translation requires an understanding of how different cultures communicate. Translators must navigate cultural norms, values, and expectations to ensure that the translated text resonates with the target audience.
3. **Cultural Adaptation:** Sometimes, direct translations may not be effective due to cultural differences. Translators often adapt content to make it more relevant or acceptable to the target culture, which can involve changing references, examples, or even the tone of the text.
4. **Power Dynamics:** Cultural interaction in translation also involves power relations between cultures. Dominant cultures may overshadow minority ones, influencing how texts are translated and which voices are represented.
5. **Hybridization:** In a globalized world, translation can lead to cultural hybridization, where elements from different cultures blend. This can result in new forms of expression that reflect a mix of cultural influences.
6. **Ethical Considerations:** Translators face ethical dilemmas related to cultural representation. They must decide how to faithfully represent the source culture while being sensitive to the values and norms of the target culture.
7. **Audience Reception:** Understanding the target audience's cultural background is crucial for effective translation. The reception of a translated text can vary significantly based on cultural context, affecting its interpretation and impact.
8. **Cultural Identity:** Translation can play a role in shaping cultural identity. By translating texts from one culture to another, translators contribute to the exchange of ideas and values, influencing how cultures perceive themselves and each other.
9. **Translation Strategies:** Translators employ various strategies (e.g., domestication vs. foreignization) based on their understanding of cultural interaction. Domestication makes a text more familiar to the target culture, while foreignization retains elements of the source culture.
10. **Feedback Loop:** Cultural interaction is a dynamic process. Translations can influence the source culture as much as they reflect it, creating a feedback loop where cultures continuously shape and reshape each other through translated texts.

Overall, Cultural Interaction Theory in translation studies highlights the complex interplay between language and culture, emphasizing that effective translation goes beyond linguistic accuracy to encompass cultural understanding and sensitivity.

Chat GPT4 exemplifies the strategy for text translations based on the cultural interaction theory below:

Translating a text from the Holy Qur'ān into English using Cultural Interaction Theory involves considering both the linguistic and cultural contexts of the source and target languages. Here's an example to illustrate how this might work:

### **Example Verse**

Let's take a commonly cited verse, such as Surah Al-Fatiha (1:1): بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim).

#### **Literal Translation**

A straightforward translation would be: In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

#### **Cultural Interaction Considerations**

1. Cultural Context: The phrase 'Bismillah' is often used by Muslims before beginning any significant task. This cultural practice may not be fully understood by non-Muslim audiences.

2. Audience Reception: For English-speaking readers, especially those unfamiliar with Islamic practices, the significance of invoking God's name before an action might need further explanation.

#### **3. Adaptation Strategy:**

- Domestication: To make it more relatable to a Western audience, one might add a brief explanatory note: 'In the name of Allah (God), the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. This phrase is often recited by Muslims before beginning any important task.'

- Foreignization: Alternatively, one could retain the original Arabic phrase to emphasize its cultural significance: 'Bismillah (In the name of Allah), the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.'

4. Ethical Considerations: Translators should be mindful not to dilute the spiritual significance of the text while making it accessible. They must balance fidelity to the original meaning with clarity for the target audience.

5. Cultural Sensitivity: Recognizing that 'Allah' is a term that holds deep reverence in Islam, it's important to maintain respect in translation. Using "God" can make it more accessible but may lose some cultural specificity.

### **Final Translation Example**

Considering these factors, a culturally sensitive translation might read:

'In the name of Allah (God), the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Muslims often say this phrase before starting important tasks, reflecting their faith and seeking blessings.'

#### **Conclusion:**

This approach demonstrates how Cultural Interaction Theory can guide translators to create texts that are not only linguistically accurate but also culturally resonant and

meaningful for the target audience. By being aware of cultural nuances and audience expectations, translators can effectively bridge the gap between different cultures while respecting the integrity of the original text.

Al-Fatiha (1:2), All praise is due to God, the Lord of all worlds. (Note: ‘Allah’ refers specifically to God in Arabic, embodying His unique attributes in Islam.)

Al-Fatiha (1:3), ‘The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful’. (Note: These titles reflect God's profound compassion and forgiveness, central to Islamic belief.)

Al-Fatiha (1:4), Master of the Day of Judgment. (Note: This title underscores God's authority and the concept of accountability for one's actions in life.)

Al-Fatiha (1:5), You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help. (Note: This verse highlights the essence of monotheism in Islam, emphasizing exclusive devotion to God and reliance on Him in all matters.)

Al-Fatiha (1: 6), Guide us to the straight path. (Note: This plea reflects a deep yearning for divine guidance in navigating life's moral and ethical challenges, emphasizing the importance of following a righteous way.)

Al-Fatiha (1: 7), The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked Your anger or of those who are astray. (This verse highlights the importance of following the example of the righteous while being aware of the consequences of straying from divine guidance.)

The Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT) generated by ChatGPT4 has led to a translation model based on Bell's (1991) framework, as cited in As-Safi (2011, p. 48). This demonstrates that CIT aligns with the general principles of theorization within Translation Studies. Regarding the translation of the specific verse, the following observations can be made:

Verses 1, 3, and 4: The ChatGPT4 translations were similar to those of Ali and Shakir.

Verse 2: The ChatGPT4 translation was similar to Shakir's, except for the word ‘Allah’, which was translated as ‘God’.

Verse 5: The ChatGPT4 translation was identical to Pickthall's, except for the pronoun ‘you’, which ChatGPT4 did not consider in a historical context.

Verses 6 and 7: The ChatGPT4 translations were similar to those of Saheeh and Arberry.

The translation process was guided by the concepts of Cultural Interaction Theory.

After incorporating the concepts of Cultural Interaction Theory into ChatGPT4's understanding, the translation of Verse No. 2 replaced the word ‘God’ with ‘Allah’ in the subsequent text. This indicates that CIT enhanced ChatGPT4's performance in text translation. Below is an evaluation of the QA response from the perspective of Rater Scholar No. 1, along with a process for connecting those outcomes to the task-oriented benchmark.

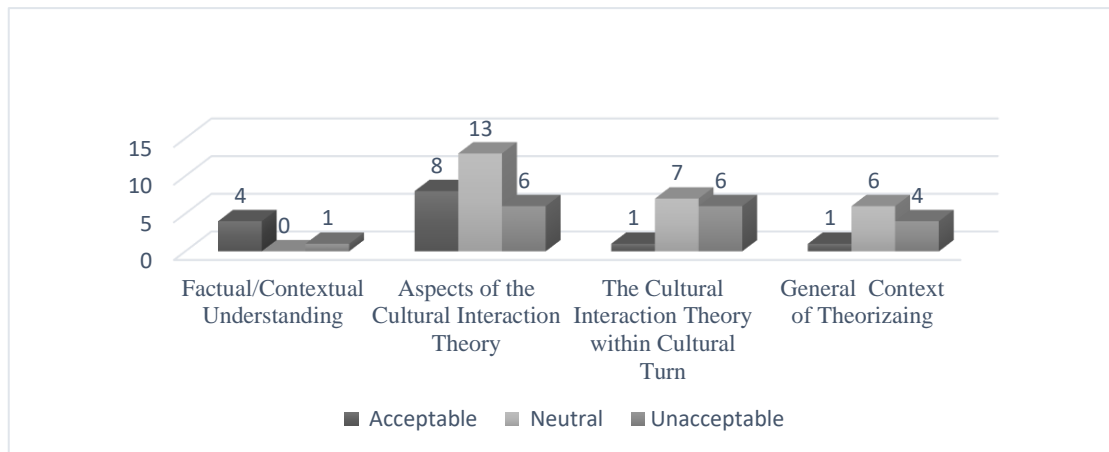


Figure 4. Categorization of scattered responses to validated questions at four levels

The questions were formulated based on the cultural turn perspective of the theory. After posing them to ChatGPT4, the questions and answers were collected. Subsequently, a Likert scale was added to the questions for a structured interview and sent to Rater No. 1. The total percentage of acceptable and neutral responses in the ‘Aspects of the Cultural Interaction Theory’ section is:

$$\frac{8 + 13}{27} \times 100 = 77.7\%$$

A total of 77.7% of responses indicated the potential of ChatGPT4 for theorization in Translation Studies within the scope of the cultural turn. To assess ChatGPT4’s ability to summarize scientific content in the field of Translation Studies, we analyzed the percentage of neutral responses across all four evaluation sections. This percentage is:

$$\frac{26}{58} \times 100 = 44.8\%$$

The high percentage of neutral responses to ChatGPT4’s answers to validated questions suggests that the model may struggle with ambiguous resolutions in summarization. However, the coherence of ChatGPT4’s responses is more closely linked to the quality of the prompts provided.

$$\frac{\text{The Total of Acceptable+Neutral Answers}}{\text{The Total of the Questions}} \times 100 = \text{The accuracy percentage}$$

$\frac{40}{58} \times 100 = 68.9\%$ , The accuracy percentage, representing the standard level of theorizing in the cultural turn based on the perspective of Rater Scholar No. 1.

The structured and semi-structured interviews based on the 3-point Likert scale revealed that both Rater Scholar No. 1 and No. 3 accepted the theory, indicating ChatGPT4’s potential for theorizing in the field of Translation Studies. However, Rater Scholar No. 1, who

evaluated ChatGPT4's Q&A based on the Likert scale, noted a 29.3% unacceptable response rate across four sections, highlighting areas where ChatGPT4 could benefit from improvement.

Several theories were proposed by the AI chatbot (ChatGPT4) across different threads. Among these, the Cultural Interaction Theory emerged as the most prominent based on scientific resources. Other proposed theories included Transcultural Translation Theory, Cultural Hybridity Theory, Cultural Transaction Theory, and Cultural Equivalence Theory.

Synthesis seeks to integrate concepts across multiple theories or literature streams, allowing researchers to view a concept or phenomenon from a new perspective. By transforming previous findings and theory, synthesis creates a novel, higher-order perspective that links phenomena previously considered distinct (Jaakkola, 2020). In line with this, the Cultural Interaction Theory synthesizes different theories and offers a new perspective. "These tools generate medical narratives based on disease distribution among patient cohorts, synthesize data, and explore and train models without revealing patient data" (Ochoa et al., 2023, p.18). Due to its synthesizing ability, ChatGPT4, based on the perspectives of Rater No. 1 and No. 3 regarding the Cultural Interaction Theory, has synthesized existing theories with cultural concepts to propose a new theory. The interviews with Rater No. 3 were semi-structured.

To facilitate theorizing by ChatGPT4, the human agent played a crucial role in providing questions (engineering the prompts), dividing them based on the study's purpose, revising them, and sending them to scholars for rating. Humans also held a central position in conducting unstructured interviews about the entire research process with Scholar No. 2, emphasizing the need for human judgment based on the gathered data.

To address ChatGPT4's inability to directly reference scientific sources, the human agent should provide the necessary referencing resources. When evaluating the data received from ChatGPT4, human agents must adhere to the chronological sequence of the information to make informed judgments and extract appropriate conclusions. This approach aligns with the perspective of Rater Scholar No. 2.

Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT) primarily focuses on the process of translating a text. The translator is central to the theory, but the proposed strategy for translating text is somewhat general, overlooking the diversity of text types and translations. Additionally, CIT initially disregarded linguistic elements unless they conveyed cultural elements. The theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of social/cultural and linguistic factors. The concept of culture in CIT is aligned with cultural science.

## **5. Findings**

Poola and Božid (2023) highlight the significance of human intuition in mathematical discovery, exemplified by figures like Ramanujan. This intuition can guide AI, such as Chat GPT, in mathematical exploration. Our research underscores the crucial role of the human agent in prompt engineering and data interpretation for Chat GPT4. Poola and Božid suggest that this framework could benefit various fields by fostering collaboration between machine learning and mathematics, leading to improved AI accuracy and reduced errors. Our study indicates that collaboration between Chat GPT4 and human researchers can contribute to the development or even proposal of new theories across different fields of study.

Johnson et al. (2023) found that Chat GPT provided mostly accurate responses to medical inquiries, as assessed by physician specialists. However, the study also identified significant limitations. Further research and model improvements are needed to address inaccuracies and ensure proper validation. The study revealed that Chat GPT 4 achieved a 68.9% accuracy rate in translation studies, indicating the model's current proficiency and the need for continued development in this area.

Ray (2023) introduced the concept of task-oriented benchmarking for evaluating text translation by Chat GPT. Task-specific benchmarks assess a conversational AI system's performance on specific tasks or areas. These benchmarks test the system's ability to understand and generate relevant responses. Examples of task-specific benchmarks include question-answering datasets like SQuAD and translation datasets like WMT. Task-oriented benchmarking can be categorized into the following areas:

**Accuracy:** Calculate the proportion of questions or tasks answered correctly.

**F1 Score:** Determine the balanced average of precision and recall, commonly used in question-answering assessments.

**BLEU:** Evaluate the quality of machine-generated translations by comparing them to reference translations.

**ROUGE:** Assess the quality of machine-generated summaries by comparing them to reference summaries.

**METEOR:** Measure the quality of machine-generated translations by considering precision, recall, and alignment.

Chat GPT demonstrated potential in translating the Holy Qur'ān, achieving high METEOR scores but lower BLEU scores (0.69), suggesting room for improvement in word correspondence. The primary goal was to assess the capabilities of machine learning tools like ChatGPT, rather than the metrics themselves. While these tools can aid translations, human oversight is crucial for accuracy and preserving the scripture's message (Dahia & Belbacha, 2024). Contrary to expectations, our research using CIT found that Chat GPT 4 accurately translated Surah Al-Fatiha. This improvement can be attributed to the CIT's influence on the translation process and Chat GPT 4's ability to synthesize information from existing translations (Ali, Shakir, Arberry, Pickthall, and Saheeh international). Verse No. 1 was translated similarly to Ali's translation. Verse No. 2 mirrored Shakir's translation, except that "Allah" was rendered as "God." Verse No. 3 also aligned closely with Ali's translation. For Verse No. 4, the translation was identical to those of Shakir, Pickthall, and Ali. In Verse No. 5, the ChatGPT4 translation matched Pickthall's translation except for the term 'you', as ChatGPT4 disregarded the historical dimension of Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT) and opted for "you" instead of "Thee." Verse No. 6 featured translations that were again identical to those of Saheeh and Arberry. The translation of Verse No. 7 was consistent with Saheeh's translation, as referenced in Hassan Zadeh et al. (2018). After discussing the concepts of Cultural Interaction Theory with ChatGPT4, the term 'God' in Verse No. 2 was replaced with 'Allah' in the subsequent translation, demonstrating that CIT enhanced ChatGPT4's performance in text translation.

To develop a theory about phenomena, it is essential to analyze data and make judgments based on that analysis. While ChatGPT-4 can analyze data, the final judgment should be

made by the researcher (Human Agent). Critical thinking involves the ability to assess information impartially and draw logical conclusions. This process often begins with an intriguing phenomenon that requires explanation or a question that needs answering. The explanations of the phenomenon or the responses to the question serve as hypotheses to be examined, derived from abductive (imaginative) reasoning that suggests possible truths (Tecuci, 2024). Since ChatGPT-4 lacks imaginative reasoning, human agents can compensate for this limitation in AI chatbots, guiding the process of theorizing based on the sequence of data.

As part of the cultural turn, CIT introduced a strategy for translating religious texts within the framework of ideological translation. CIT emphasized the importance of cultural perspective in the translation process, aligning with Bassnett's (2002) definition of CIT as a theory within Translation Studies.

General translation theory explores the fundamental principles and concepts that underlie translation across various modes, genres, and contexts. It applies to both written and oral forms, encompassing scientific, technical, political, and artistic domains, regardless of the specific languages involved (Dildorbekovna, 2022). The Cultural Interaction Theory, a general theory with a cultural focus, shares similarities with other theories that emerged during the cultural turn.

Skopos theory focuses on the translator's role in Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT), the perspective on cultural elements, and the emphasis on transferring cultural elements based on the translator's choice (the purpose or goal of translating a text). In CIT, cultural translation results in a hybrid text, influenced by both direct and indirect translation methods, as determined by the translator's decisions in conveying cultural elements and acknowledging the power dynamics inherent in translation

Munday (2016) discusses Bhabha's perspectives on cultural translation and the evolving role of translators in Translation Studies. Bhabha highlights a shift from viewing translators as neutral intermediaries to recognizing their subjectivity and agency as integral to the translation process. This perspective emphasizes that translations are influenced by the translator's ideological, geographical, and historical contexts. Key concepts such as 'in-betweenness', 'the third space', and 'hybridity' reflect themes of identity and cultural translation. Bhabha suggests that cultural hybridity can challenge colonial discourse, allowing colonized voices to interact with and reshape colonial narratives (pp. 212-236). The hybrid translated text and the shift in perspective toward the translator's role are commonalities between Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT) and cultural translation theory. CIT also emphasizes the postcolonial attitudes of the translator's culture and the elements of the source text.

Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) examines the norms of translation and their impact on the selection of translation texts. However, due to the unsystematic nature of translator behavior, DTS has not fully explored this dimension (Munday et al., pp. 178-180). In contrast, Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT) views translators as cultural mediators who facilitate the transfer of information, values, and cultural attitudes between languages and cultures during the translation process. These values can influence the relationship between the source text and the target text. From this perspective, the translator's choices in the mediating process are systemic and based on the cultural elements being conveyed. CIT therefore places the translator and their mediating choices at its center, offering a fresh perspective



ChatGPT 4 has the potential to theorize based on research findings, as demonstrated by the interviews with scholars No. 1 and 3. The standard level of theorizing by ChatGPT 4 within cultural turn theories is 57% of section three. Overall, ChatGPT 4's theorizing processes are 68.9% standardized, which is equivalent to its accuracy. The ambiguous resolution, indicated by neutral answers, is 44.8%. The coherence of the answers is closely related to prompt engineering. The weaknesses and areas for improvement are illustrated by unacceptable answers, which account for 29.3% due to insufficient data for ChatGPT 4 to produce correct responses.

To develop validated questions that indicate the potential for theorization and establish a standard level of theorization by ChatGPT-4, prompts must be grounded in cultural turn theories and the methods proposed by theorists in this domain. The role of ChatGPT-4 should be clearly defined to ensure accurate responses. The analysis of ChatGPT-4's question-and-answer outputs should align with the research purpose. First, the questions must be approved by a scholar in Translation Studies. Then, the questions and corresponding answers generated by ChatGPT-4 should be evaluated using a three-point Likert scale and subsequently reviewed by the scholar. If the research focus changes during the process, additional questions may need to be posed to address any recall issues associated with ChatGPT-4.

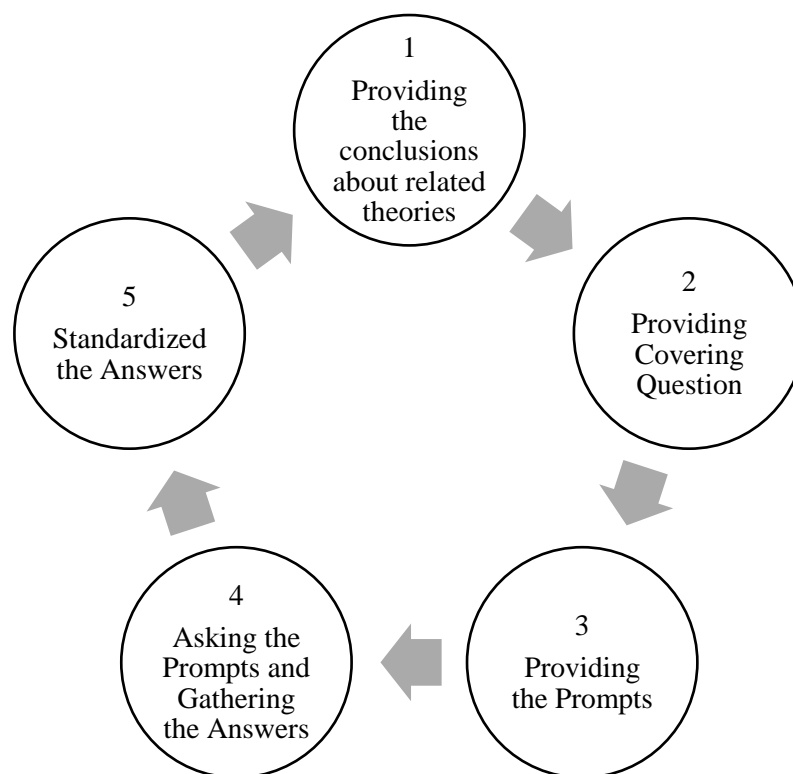


Figure 5. The steps toward theorizing based on the researcher's observed data

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that ChatGPT-4 has the potential to contribute to Translation Studies, particularly within the framework of the cultural turn. The Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT) provides a general framework for understanding the translation process, emphasizing the translator's crucial role and the hybrid nature of the translated text. CIT posits that the translated text incorporates elements from both the source and target

cultures, with the translator selecting these elements based on the specific function or purpose of the translation.

The evaluation of theories is a fundamental aspect of scholarly inquiry. Bacharach (1989) proposed 'falsifiability' as a key criterion for evaluating scientific theories. He argued that theories should be formulated in a manner that allows for empirical testing and potential refutation. Additionally, Bacharach emphasized the importance of "utility" as a bridge between theory and research, highlighting the practical value and applicability of a theory

The falsifiability of Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT) has been evaluated, revealing that the findings of this research indicate that ChatGPT-4 translated Surah Al-Fatiha accurately according to CIT. This accuracy appears to stem from an enhanced translation process facilitated by CIT. Additionally, ChatGPT-4's synthesizing capabilities may have contributed to the quality of the translated text, which closely aligns with five established translations of the Holy Qur'ān (Ali, Shakir, Arberry, Pickthall, and Saheeh International). For instance, Verse 1 was translated similarly to Ali's translation, while Verse 2 was translated.

The "falsifiability" of CIT is evaluated, so the findings of this research based on the CIT indicated that Chat GPT 4 translated the Surah Al-Fatiha correctly based on the Cultural Interaction Theory. It must be due to the enhancement of the translation process based on the CIT, and the synthesizing ability of Chat GPT4 could enhance the produced translation text because the translated text as mentioned here was closely related to five translations of the holy Qur'ān (Ali, Shakir, Arberry, Pickthall, and Saheeh international). Verse No.1 was translated similarly to Ali's Translation. Verse 2 was translated similarly to Shakir's, with the exception that 'Allah' was rendered as 'God'. Verse 3 closely resembled Ali's translation. The translation of Verse 4 was identical to those of Shakir, Pickthall, and Ali. For Verse 5, ChatGPT-4's translation was akin to Pickthall's, except for the choice of 'you', as ChatGPT-4 opted for 'you' instead of 'Thee', overlooking the historical context of CIT. In Verse 6, the translations matched those of Saheeh International and Arberry. Finally, the translation of Verse 7 was identical to Saheeh's, as noted in Hassan Zadeh et al (2018).

After discussing the concepts of Cultural Interaction Theory (CIT) with ChatGPT-4, the word 'God' in Verse 2 was replaced with 'Allah' in the subsequent translation. This change indicates that CIT improved ChatGPT-4's translation performance. CIT provides a strategic framework for translating texts and offers an evaluative approach for assessing translated material (see Appendix A).

The evaluation of CIT within the broader context of cultural turn theories revealed a strength of definition of 57.1%. Moreover, the evaluation ratio for CIT's aspects reached 77.7%, indicating a significant level of theorization by ChatGPT-4 in Translation Studies within the scope of the cultural turn. The proposed standardization framework for evaluating ChatGPT-4's theory is rooted in existing theories and emphasizes factual, contextual understanding (80%), coherence, and ambiguity resolution in the model's responses (44.8%). From a scholarly perspective, the overall accepted/neutral responses from ChatGPT-4 demonstrate a 68.9% accuracy rate. The "utility" of CIT was assessed through references to related concepts and theories within the cultural turn. Given ChatGPT-4's ability to propose a translation strategy based on CIT, its practical applicability in research is evident. In accordance with Bacharach's (1989) criteria, CIT exhibits both 'falsifiability' and 'utility'.

This study has paved the way for further research into AI chatbots, such as ChatGPT-4. While humans have traditionally been the primary theorists, this study highlights the positive potential of AI in this domain. The development of Translation Studies has been accelerated by analyzing theories from other scientific disciplines and applying them to this field. In contrast to the negative perceptions surrounding AI chatbots in scholarly research, this study demonstrates the positive benefits of utilizing these tools.

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## Appendix A

### The Strategy for the Rest of the Al-Fatiha Surah Based on Cultural Interaction Theory

Literal Translation					
"All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds."	"The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."	"Master of the Day of Judgment."	"You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help."	"Guide us to the straight path."	"The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray."
Applying Cultural Interaction Theory by Translator					
1. Cultural Context:					
The phrase "All praise is due to Allah" emphasizes gratitude and acknowledgment of God's sovereignty. This reflects a core principle in Islamic worship and life.	Attributes "Most Gracious" and "Most Merciful" highlight two of the most significant qualities of God in Islam. They reflect the compassionate and forgiving nature of God, which is central to Islamic theology.	This verse emphasizes God's sovereignty and authority over the Day of Judgment, a fundamental concept in Islamic eschatology. It signifies accountability and the ultimate justice that awaits all individuals.	This verse emphasizes monotheism (Tawhid) and the exclusive devotion to God. It reflects the core Islamic belief that worship and reliance should be directed solely towards Allah.	This verse expresses a plea for guidance, reflecting the human desire for clarity and direction in life. The "straight path" symbolizes a righteous way of living according to divine will, which is a common theme in many spiritual traditions.	This verse distinguishes between different groups of people based on their relationship with divine guidance. It reflects a common theme in many religious traditions where followers seek to emulate the virtues of the righteous while avoiding the pitfalls of those who have strayed.
2. Intercultural Communication:					
The term "Lord of the worlds" signifies God's authority over all creation. The translator should ensure that this conveys the vastness of God's dominion, which includes not just humanity but all beings and realms.	These terms can be understood as encompassing both general mercy and specific acts of kindness. It's important to convey that these attributes are not just descriptors but foundational to a Muslim's understanding of their relationship with God.	The term "Master" conveys a sense of control and dominion. In many cultures, the idea of a final judgment is significant, but the emphasis on God's mastery invites reflection on divine justice rather than human interpretation of fairness.	The phrase "You alone" stresses the singularity of God in worship, which may resonate with various religious traditions that emphasize devotion to a higher power. However, it also highlights the unique Islamic perspective on reliance on God alone.	The concept of seeking guidance resonates across cultures, where individuals often look for wisdom or direction from a higher power or moral framework. It can be compared to similar requests for guidance found in various religious texts.	The reference to "those upon whom You have bestowed favor" can be compared to figures or communities revered in other faiths, such as saints or enlightened individuals. This creates a point of connection for audiences familiar with similar concepts.

<b>3. Negotiation of Meaning:</b>					
To enhance understanding, the translator might provide context about what "worlds" means in an Islamic framework, encompassing both the physical universe and spiritual realms.	To bridge cultural gaps, a translator might explain that "Gracious" and "Merciful" denote an all-encompassing love and care that God extends toward all of creation, emphasizing that this mercy is available to everyone.	To convey the weight of this verse, it may be helpful to explain that the "Day of Judgment" is viewed as a time when all deeds will be assessed, underscoring the importance of living a righteous life.	To convey the depth of this verse, it can be helpful to explain that worship is not only about rituals but encompasses all aspects of life, while seeking help signifies turning to God in times of need, reflecting trust and faith.	To convey the significance of this verse, it's essential to explain that the "straight path" represents a moral and ethical way of living, encompassing both spiritual and practical aspects of life.	To convey the significance of this verse, it's important to clarify who these favored individuals are—prophets, righteous believers, etc.—and what constitutes "anger" or "astray" in this context.
<b>4. Power Dynamics:</b>					
Care should be taken to present this verse with reverence, as it is a declaration of faith and gratitude central to Islamic belief.	The translation should reflect the reverence associated with these divine attributes. They are not merely adjectives but profound titles that shape a believer's understanding of God's nature.	The translation should reflect the authority and majesty of God. Using "Master" instead of "Owner" can help convey a deeper sense of respect and reverence.	The use of "You alone" establishes a direct relationship between the believer and God, emphasizing personal devotion and reliance rather than intermediaries, which can be a significant distinction for readers from different faith backgrounds.	The act of asking for guidance emphasizes humility and recognition of human limitations. It establishes a dynamic where the believer acknowledges their need for divine support in navigating life's complexities.	This verse underscores the believer's desire to align themselves with divinely favored individuals, illustrating a power dynamic where divine approval is sought and valued over worldly status.
<b>5. Adaptation vs. Fidelity:</b>					
While staying true to the original meaning, the translation can use "God" instead of "Allah" for accessibility, but it should be clear that "Allah" is a specific reference in Islamic tradition.	While it is crucial to maintain the original meaning, using "God" instead of "Allah" could help non-Arabic speakers connect more easily, provided it is clear that these attributes pertain specifically to the Islamic understanding of God.	While it is important to remain faithful to the original meaning, adding a brief explanation about the significance of accountability in Islam can enhance understanding for those unfamiliar with the concept.	While maintaining fidelity to the original text, providing a brief commentary on the importance of worship and seeking divine assistance can enhance understanding for those unfamiliar with Islamic practices.	While staying true to the original meaning, it may be beneficial to elaborate on what the "straight path" entails in Islamic teachings, such as adherence to justice, compassion, and righteousness.	While maintaining the original meaning, it may be helpful to provide examples of behaviors or attitudes that represent both the favored and those who have gone astray, making the message more relatable.

<b>6. Cultural Sensitivity</b>					
The translation should be mindful of readers who may not have a background in Islam. A brief explanation can help contextualize the significance of praising God in daily life for Muslims.	For readers unfamiliar with Islamic teachings, it may be beneficial to include a brief note explaining the significance of God's mercy in daily life and how it influences Muslim beliefs and practices.	For readers from different backgrounds, emphasizing that this verse serves as a reminder of moral responsibility and ethical living can resonate across cultures.	For audiences from various Backgrounds, emphasizes that this verse encourages a deep personal relationship with God, based on trust and devotion, which can foster a sense of connection.	For audiences from diverse backgrounds, framing this request as a universal quest for purpose and ethical living can foster empathy and understanding.	Recognizing that interpretations of "anger" and "astray" can vary among cultures, it's crucial to frame these concepts in a way that emphasizes moral and ethical choices rather than judgment.
<b>Conclusion:</b>					
This translation retains the essence and reverence of the original verse while making it accessible to an English-speaking audience. By applying Cultural Interaction Theory, we ensure that the translation honors the cultural and theological significance of the text, fostering greater understanding across different backgrounds.	This translation preserves the essential qualities described in the original Arabic while ensuring clarity and accessibility for an English-speaking audience. By applying Cultural Interaction Theory, we enhance understanding and appreciation of these divine attributes across different cultural contexts.	This translation maintains the original meaning while providing context that enhances comprehension for an English-speaking audience. By applying Cultural Interaction Theory, we create a bridge for understanding the significance of divine authority and accountability in Islam.	This translation preserves the original meaning while providing context that enhances comprehension for an English-speaking audience. By applying Cultural Interaction Theory, we create a bridge for understanding the significance of worship and dependence on God in the Islamic faith.	This translation maintains fidelity to the original text while providing context that enhances comprehension for an English-speaking audience. By applying Cultural Interaction Theory, we create a bridge for understanding the significance of seeking guidance in one's spiritual journey.	This translation preserves the original text while providing context that enhances understanding for an English-speaking audience. By applying Cultural Interaction Theory, we facilitate a deeper comprehension of the distinctions made in this verse and its relevance in the spiritual journey.



## A Descriptive Study of Coherence in Seven English Translations of the Surah An-Naba

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### ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with coherence in seven translations of Surah An-Naba in the Holy Qur'an. Considering Charolles's (1983) descriptive model, which suggests that establishing coherence may involve adding new information to the target text, it aimed to find the frequency of supplemental and explanatory coherence and reveal whether translating coherence results in an explicated translation. For this purpose, Charolles's (1983) dichotomous modes of coherence in translation, namely supplemental (implication) and explanatory (explicitation), were considered as the framework of the study. The data analyzed were selected using a purposive sampling method specific to sacred scriptures. Additionally, seven renditions of the Surah An-Naba by celebrated translators were analyzed to discover coherence relations and determine the frequency and nature of these translations. The results indicated that most renditions maintained a similar coherence level to the source text, providing only minimal additional information, which aligned most frequently with the mode of supplemental coherence. Given that explicitation in translation remains a hypothetical concept, the findings offer valuable insights for improving Qur'anic translations.

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## 1. Introduction

Introducing religions to new contexts through translation is one of the oldest translation practices. The pioneering figures in developing the modern theory of sacred translation are Nida (1964) and Nida and Taber (1969). Nida and Taber (1969) propose a well-known distinction between dynamic equivalence and formal correspondence. Formal correspondence, commonly used in translating Biblical and sacred texts, involves translating the source text (ST) form into the target text (TT), preserving the original wording and grammatical structure as closely as possible. This approach, which prioritizes the form of a message over its pragmatic function, is seen as a mark of correctness in translation, as it offers the TT audience a more accurate and faithful translation. Nida and Taber (1969) also introduce “dynamic equivalence,” which involves a process of thought transfer rather than strict adherence to form. Dynamic equivalence aims to create an “equivalent effect,” allowing TT readers to understand the original message and respond similarly to the ST audience. Going beyond formal aspects requires the translator to also consider the cultural context of the target language.

According to Munday (2012), Saint Jerome was one of the earliest translators and interpreters to propose a theory for translating the Bible. Jerome found that closely following the original scripture did not always convey the true meaning in the target language. To address this, he categorized translation strategies into two main types: word-for-word and sense-for-sense. Although Jerome believed the word-for-word strategy was best for translating holy texts, he still exercised a certain level of freedom in translating these scriptures.

The strategy of word-for-word translation was later expanded and gained additional theoretical and ethical justification. In modern translation theory, the term used for this approach is “literalness,” which historically served as an ethical principle aimed at maintaining “faithfulness”. According to Munday (2012), this concept, also known as fidelity or loyalty, centers on three core principles: “(a) transferred cultural words; (b) no unnecessary deviation from grammatical and lexical ST structures, unless required by TL constraints; and (c) loyalty to the ST author’s textual objectives” (Munday, 2012, p. 188). As can be seen, a translator following this strategy should hold a strong conviction that the ST form and content should be almost identically mirrored in the translated text, which demonstrates a clear tendency toward literalism.

The present study will focus on a model of coherence designed to trace the continuity of information in a sacred scripture as it is communicated through the text. Such a model can significantly help text analysts identify new mechanisms by which texts conceal information and explore how this information can be made visible. Since the study examines translated sacred scriptures, it can effectively reveal how interpretative strategies may influence such translations. Accordingly, this study aims to accomplish the following key objectives:

1. To analyze the frequency of supplemental and explanatory coherence strategies across seven translations of the Holy Qur’an.
2. To assess the statistical significance of differences observed between these coherence strategies.
3. To evaluate the validity of explicitation as one of the proposed universals of translation.

This study will contribute to the field of translation studies by offering a novel discussion and analysis of coherence in the translation of sacred scriptures, specifically within the supplemental and explanatory modes. This study offers valuable contributions across multiple areas within translation studies and related fields. First, it can help expand or verify claims within descriptive translation studies (DTS), particularly regarding the concept of explicitation. Additionally, the findings may benefit cultural translation theorists by providing insights into the cross-cultural translation of sacred scriptures. For translation trainers and educators, the results and discussion address a challenging area of study, offering practical implications for training programs. Finally, the study highlights key distinctions between the roles of religious text interpreters and translators, clarifying how their responsibilities and approaches may differ.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Translation universals and explicitation

According to Munday (2012), translation theory, for most of its history, depended on prescriptive conventions that defined the characteristics of a good translation. However, the need for more unbiased theories has been sharply felt in translation studies. Accordingly, some professionals in the field have sought to develop models and frameworks to study translation descriptively. As a fundamental step in establishing translation as an academic discipline, DTS was proposed by Toury (1995) to unravel the essence and mechanism of translation. Toury's goal was to give a systematic structure to translation studies, enhancing its scientific prestige. The paradigm of studies put forth by Toury is based on descriptive research.

According to Pym (2010), the central question in DTS is not what translations should be, but what translations are or look like. Therefore, rather than prescribing rules, DTS aims to establish a common basis for studying the nature of translation without imposing normative conventions. As a result of this neutral stance, DTS is typically expected to investigate habitual translation behaviors within a scientific framework. Naturally, when a system studies a phenomenon scientifically, it should identify patterns and make predictions (Chesterman 2007). Since it emerged in the last decade of the twentieth century, one of DTS's missions has been to discover any regularities that occur in, dominate, or characterize translations. Consequently, experts in the field have developed strategies, models, and frameworks to study translation descriptively.

Along similar lines, the concept of "translation universals" was proposed within DTS (Munday 2012; Pym 2010). If translations exhibit certain similarities, could these similarities be rule-governed and predictable? Consequently, a translation universal can be simply defined as "a feature that is found in translations and in no other kind of text" (Pym 2010, p.78). Up to the present, translation experts have identified certain universals with caution, including lexical simplification, explicitation, adaptation, and equalizing unique items (Pym 2010, pp.79-80). Pym (2010, p.79) also asserts that explicitation is a hypothesized translation universal which is characterized by "greater 'redundancy' of translations". On the other hand, based on Munday (2009), explicitation can be defined more specifically as follows:

In contrast to implicitation, explicitation (or explication) means that information that is only implicitly mentioned in the ST is expressed clearly in the TT. Making

information explicit in the TT can take place at least at three levels of language: grammar, semantics, and pragmatics/discourse (p. 187).

## *2.2. Background*

Over the past four decades, the field of linguistics has rapidly expanded its theoretical and applied domains. The focus on the centrality of textuality and all of the characteristics associated with it suggests that linguistic studies are actively trying to explain language events from a systematic and structured perspective (Toury, 1995; Pym, 2010; Monday, 2012). Among the many concepts proposed by linguists, coherence has been explored by different theorists who have attempted to describe how these linguistic variable functions (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981; Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Coherence is, therefore, about the continuity of semantic content in the formation of concepts and relations. The networks created by coherence are less visible and tangible than those of cohesion, as coherence focuses more on discovering the “sense” of a text, not its visible discursive relations. Similarly, De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981, p. 109) explain that coherence is “the outcome of actualizing meanings to make sense”.

Along with these purely linguistic concepts, coherence has also been addressed in areas of Applied Linguistics, including translation studies. Translation expert Baker (2011) explains two overriding concerns in dealing with coherence. The first issue concerns the relationship between coherence and pragmatics, while the second aspect addresses how interpretation can significantly influence the perception of textual systems. These two aspects become extremely challenging when translating sacred scriptures, which contain extensive implied prior knowledge. The basic problem is that if new information is added to the translation, the final text may develop considerably different semantic and even pragmatic meanings. Bell (1991, p. 165) explains that coherence “consists of the configuration and sequencing of the concepts and relations of the textual world which underlie and are realized by the surface text: the propositional structures”. The phrase “textual world” illustrates how the real world may be represented through textual semiotics. This representation entails a meaningful sequence of events encapsulated in each proposition of a text.

In a different definition, Hatim and Mason (1997, p.16) state, “the underlying concepts and relations must also appear to the reader to be mutually relevant and accessible in establishing and maintaining sense constancy or coherence”. This definition emphasizes the fact that meaning should remain consistent as the text develops. Additionally, “accessibility” highlights the importance of relying on information already known to the audience. This important factor is known as “background knowledge” in discourse studies (Bell, 1991; Brown and Yule, 1983; Yule, 2006). Classifying coherence as a form of pragmatic equivalence, Baker (2011) describes this notion as follows:

The coherence of a text is a result of the interaction between knowledge presented in the text and the reader’s own knowledge and experience of the world, the latter being influenced by a variety of factors such as age, sex, race, nationality, education, occupation, and political and religious affiliations. Even a simple cohesive relation of co-reference cannot be recognized, and therefore cannot be said to contribute to the coherence of a text, if it does not fit in with a reader’s prior knowledge of the world (p. 232).

The discussion of the pragmatics of coherence can lead us to a broader context: culture. Baker (2011) and Larson (1998) explain that coherence is closely related to the culture within which language is exchanged. Coherence also involves a socio-pragmatic function and helps structure the meaning of a text while facilitating its logical progression (Baker, 2011). Given this, one could argue that sacred scriptures are a rich array of culture-specific images (e.g., the sun), values (e.g., bravery), traditions (e.g., animal sacrifice), and even figures of speech (e.g., similes and metaphors) within each cultural context. In addition, sacred scriptures contain strong cultural links that are meaningful within the ST. Each of these can serve as a hidden source of information in any given text. In this vein, a translator of sacred texts may find it necessary to highlight these pieces of information, which are deeply rooted in the source language and culture.

This study examines coherence in seven translations of the Holy Qur'an using Charroles' (1983) descriptive model, which classifies coherence into supplemental and explanatory modes. Such a model can significantly help text analysts identify new mechanisms by which texts conceal information and how this information can be appropriately made visible. Since the study deals with translated sacred scriptures, it can accurately identify how interpretive strategies may influence such translations. Since establishing coherence may involve adding new information to the TT, the question arises whether translating coherence leads to an explicated translation. At the same time, the study revisits explication as a translation universal to examine whether this notion is indeed a universal in the case of Qur'anic translation.

In this context, the following questions were addressed in the study:

1. What is the frequency of supplemental or explanatory strategies in establishing coherence used in the seven English translations of the Surah *An-Naba*?
2. Does coherence in the translations lead to explication as an alleged universal of translation?

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Materials*

In this study, seven renditions of the Holy Surah An-Naba by seven renowned translators were considered. Additionally, in accordance with the conventions of Qur'anic translation and to ensure validity, Qur'anic interpretations by various scholars across different periods were used where necessary. The renditions in the study are presented as follows:

R1: Yusuf Ali (1934)

R2: Shakir (1999)

R3: Irving (1985)

R4: Mohammad-Sarwar (1920)

R5: Pickthall (1930)

R6: Saffarzadeh (2001)

R7: Arberry (1955)

### 3.2. Framework of the study

Charolles' supplemental and explanatory model was used as the framework for the study. Charolles (1983) divides coherence into two major types: supplemental and explanatory. Indeed, his categorization of supplemental and explanatory types is related to the issue of coherence relations. Charolles (1983) goes on to describe the difference between the two types: "The former never lead to the explication of a thematic continuity (they indicate that an element is repeated from one segment to another), whereas the latter justify this continuity (they lead to the manifestation of the reason why a certain thing is said about an element)" (p. 78). As a result, the two types of coherence can be explained here. Supplemental coherence occurs when the author does not seek to explain the relations that make the text coherent. In simpler terms, the speaker/writer assumes that the audience will understand the implicit relations in the text. Explanatory coherence, on the other hand, occurs when the speaker/writer tries to explain why some pieces of textual information are connected. In fact, it may be assumed that the audience needs more information to understand the relations that organize the text conceptually.

### 3.3. Procedures

The present study was based on a corpus of seven Qur'anic translations, which are generally regarded as the most widely read translations of the Holy Qur'an. Since the focus of the study was on the aspects of coherence in translation in sacred scriptures, the data analyzed within the framework of the study were selected using purposive sampling. Additionally, in line with the framework of the study, two modes of coherence in translation—namely, supplemental and explanatory—were examined. To employ the framework of the above model in a DTS study, the coherence relations had to be identified and supported by the interpretations. In this vein, the study proceeded line-by-line to identify any triggers for coherence in the Holy Verses. After that, the translations were analyzed separately to determine how they rendered the coherence of related pieces of information. Following this step, the observed data were classified according to the notions of supplemental and explanatory types of coherence. That is, if the translation in question treated implicit information with no additional explanation, one point was added to its supplemental coherence. Otherwise, when extra information was provided to explain coherence-related connections, it was considered as one point added to the explanatory coherence.

The analytic procedure can be outlined as follows. First, the verse was read in light of various interpretations to determine if it contained any supplemental coherence, specifically with implicit information intended for English or non-Muslim readers. Next, the translations were examined to assess how they transferred this implicit information. If the translations did not provide additional information, it was considered an instance of supplemental coherence. However, if additional information was provided, it was classified as explanatory coherence. Notably, omissions were not counted in the analysis, as the model only focused on added information in the translation. Therefore, any additions were categorized as instances of explanatory or explicated coherence.

## 4. Findings

In the following, some samples of the renditions of the Surah *An-Naba* by seven different translators are presented:

*Example #1 (Surah An-Naba: 1):*

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

- R1. Concerning what are they disputing?
- R2. Of what go they ask one another?
- R3. What are they questioning one another about?
- R4. What do they quarrel about?
- R5. Whereof do they question one another?
- R6. Of what do they ask one another?
- R7. Of what do they question one another?

*Example #2 (Surah An-Naba: 2):*

عَنِ النَّبَأِ الْعَظِيمِ

- R1. Concerning the great news.
- R2. About the great event.
- R3. About an important announcement.
- R4. They quarrel about the great news.
- R5. (It is) of the awful tidings.
- R6. Of the great news [of the resurrection day].
- R7. Of the mighty tidings.

The two verses mentioned above establish a textual relationship: a question is posed in the first verse (عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ), and it is then answered in the second. This forms a basic conversational pattern. While all seven English renditions convey the same proposition, they use different semantics to express it (e.g., disputing, ask, questioning, etc.). As a result, the translations preserve the supplemental coherence of the original verse, without providing further justification for the question or offering any background information. In the Arabic original of the second verse, the phrase “great tidings” is used. Six of the translations maintain this phrase relatively unchanged in English, while in R6, additional explanation is provided about what the great news might refer to, depending on interpretation. This added information shifts the supplemental coherence of the original two verses into explanatory coherence. It is also important to note that the introductory structure “It is” in R5 cannot be classified as explanatory coherence, as it is a matter of cohesion, not coherence.

*Example #3 (Surah An-Naba: 3):*

الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ

- R1. About which they can not agree?
- R2. About which they differ?
- R3. Which they are disagreeing over.
- R4. Concerning which they have disputes.

R5. Concerning which they are in disagreement.

R6. About which they [the believers and the disbelievers] differ and make dispute.

R7. Whereon they are at variance.

There is no evidence of any change in coherence in the English renditions of this verse, except in R6. In this case, R6 appears to clarify for English readers the exact referent of the pronoun “they”. By doing so, however, R6 provides a more coherent version of the Holy Scripture, adding information beyond the text itself. Additionally, the implied information “believers and disbelievers” is explicated in R6, transforming the supplemental coherence of the ST into explanatory coherence. When considering the R6 translation of the verse alongside the others, it is clear that R6 offers a more coherent rewriting.

*Example #4 (Surah An-Naba: 4):*

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ

R1. Verily, they shall soon (come to) know!

R2. Nay! they shall soon come to know.

R3. However they soon will know!

R4. They will soon come to.

R5. Nay, but they will come to know!

R6. [what the deniers say is but falsehood]and they shall soon know;

R7. No indeed; they shall soon know!

Clearly, all the renditions maintain the same level of coherence as the ST by providing only minimal information present in the verse. According to the model under study, this constitutes an instance of supplemental coherence. However, R6 includes additional explanations that justify the logical progression of the text. At this initial stage, the English reader of the Holy Scripture translated in R6 is provided with some information about the question, its topic, and those involved in the questioning. In contrast, the other translations have not yet clarified or justified any of these aspects. The other translations maintain supplemental coherence by preserving the implicit content of the verse: “what the deniers say is but falsehood”.

*Example #5 (Surah An-Naba: 5):*

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ

R1. Verily, verily they shall soon (come to) know!

R2. Nay! Nay! They shall soon know.

R3. Then indeed they shall know!

R4. Yes, indeed, before long they will learn all about it.

R5. Nay again, but they will come to know!

R6. Verily they shall soon know.

R7. Again, no indeed; they shall soon know!

The translations of this verse, although relatively longer than the original, manage to maintain the balance of information between the ST and the TT. As a result, the translations do not introduce any extra coherence to justify the meaning. Furthermore, no instance of explanatory coherence occurs here, as this verse is a rhetorical repetition of the previous one. In fact, the meaning progresses evenly without any new content. Therefore, no statistical addition takes place.

*Example #6 (Surah An-Naba: 6):*

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا

- R1. Have we not made the earth as a wide expanse,
- R2. Have we not made the earth an even expanse?
- R3. Have we not laid the earth out as a cradle?
- R4. Have we not made the earth as a place to rest?
- R5. Have we not made the earth an expanse,
- R6. Did we not make the earth a vast space for establishing your habitation on it,
- R7. Have we not made the earth as a cradle?

It appears that all renditions except R6 have the same coherence level compared with the ST, by providing only minimal information existing in the verse which is an instance of supplemental coherence. However, R6 has some extra explanations justifying the logical progression of the text, which is an instance of explanatory coherence.

*Example #7 (Surah An-Naba: 7):*

وَ الْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا

- R1. And the mountains as pegs?
- R2. And the mountains as projections (theorens)?
- R3. And (set) the mountains up as kingpins?
- R4. And the mountains as pegs (to anchor the earth)?
- R5. And the high hills bulwarks?
- R6. And the mountains as strong pegs to keep the earth and you secure against the shaking?
- R7. And the mountains as pegs?

According to the interpretations referenced, the ST (وَ الْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا) only presents mountains as pegs, with no further explanation of this simile in the Arabic original. In fact, the English reader may not fully grasp the cultural significance of the Arabic simile. On the other hand, R4 and R6 demonstrate explanatory coherence. Phrases such as “to anchor the earth” or “to keep the earth and you secure against the shaking” build upon the source language’s metaphor and explicate its meaning by justifying the simile. As a result, the supplemental coherence of the ST is transformed into explanatory coherence in these two renditions. The other translations maintain this implicit information as supplemental, offering no additional justification, and thus employ the supplemental coherence strategy.



*Example #8 (Surah An-Naba: 8):*

وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا

- R1. And (have we not) created you in pairs,
- R2. And we created you in pairs
- R3. We have created you in pairs
- R4. Have we not created you in pairs,
- R5. And we have created you in pairs,
- R6. And we did created you in pairs (male and female to give you family and to maintain your generation)
- R7. And we created you in pairs

The concept of “creation in pairs” is rendered with the same implication as in the ST in all renditions except R6. In R6, the translator adds that “creation in pairs” maintains generation. This extra information reflects the translator’s interpretation of the verse. According to Islamic interpretations, “creation in pairs” is seen as a sign of God’s power, which may not be immediately clear to a non-Muslim reader. Therefore, while the other translations leave this implicit justification as supplemental coherence, R6 introduces additional explanatory coherence by providing this interpretation.

*Example #9 (Surah An-Naba: 9):*

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا

- R1. And made you sleep for rest,
- R2. And made your sleep to be rest (to you)
- R3. And granted your sleeping for repose
- R4. Made sleep for you to rest,
- R5. And have appointed your sleep for repose,
- R6. And we caused sleep for your rest Repose;
- R7. And we appointed your sleep for a rest

Apparently, this verse does not contain any explanatory coherence, because Qur’anic interpretations only mentioned “sleeping” and “repose” in the actual meanings of the words. Thus, the English reader will not need any more pragmatic information for understanding.

*Example #10 (Surah An-Naba: 10):*

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا

- R1. And made the night as a covering,
- R2. And we made the night to be a covering
- R3. And granted night as a garment,
- R4. Made the night as a covering,
- R5. And have appointed the night as a cloak,

R6. And we appointed Night a covering to protect you from tumult and fatigue of the day;

R7. And we appointed night for a garment

All TTs illustrate “night” as a covering or garment, exactly as it appears in the ST. These words refer to the conditions necessary for “sleeping” and tranquility. As a result, the English reader may require additional cultural information to fully understand the implicit content within the supplemental coherence. However, R6 explicates the verse by providing the reasoning behind the simile, making it more comprehensible to English readers: “to protect you from the tumult and fatigue of the day”. Consequently, an instance of explanatory coherence occurs in this English rendition.

*Example #11 (Surah An-Naba: 11):*

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا

R1. And made the day as a means of subsistence?

R2. And we made the day for seeking livelihood

R3. And granted daytime for (you to earn your) living in.

R4. And the day as time for you to make a living?

R5. And have appointed the day for livelihood

R6. And we appointed Day a time for work and seeking livelihood (from Allah's Bounties)

R7. And we appointed day for a livelihood

All TTs illustrated “the day” as the time for gaining subsistence. Yet, R6 has given “from Allah's Bounties”, which is simply some extra information. This of course may affect the balance of information as R6 gives more information in case of supplemental coherence.

*Example #12 (Surah An-Naba: 12):*

وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا

R1. And (have we not) built over you the seven firmaments,

R2. And we made above you seven strong ones

R3. We have built seven firmaments above you

R4. Have we not made seven strong heavens above you,

R5. And we have built above you seven strong (heavens),

R6. And we built above you Seven Mighty Heavens:

R7. And we have built above you seven strong ones (heavens)

Both the ST and the English renditions are equally coherent, because the main theme of the ST is transferred. However, R2 is the only translation that did not provide the extra information for understanding the verse.

*Example #13 (Surah An-Naba: 13):*

وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا

- R1. And placed (therein) a blazing lamp?
- R2. And we made a shining lamp (Sun)
- R3. And set a blazing lamp there.
- R4. (the Sun) as a shining torch
- R5. And have appointed a dazzling lamp,
- R6. And we placed in it a highly light-Giving lamp, (by the name of Sun)
- R7. And we appointed a blazing lamp (sun)

Although the concept of “وهاجا” was rendered in different forms into English, coherence-related modifications were made by some other factors: The word “Sun” which is stated directly in R2, R4, R6, and R7 is an implied image in the ST. Therefore, the supplemental coherence of the text was expanded into an explanatory coherence in these renditions, while the unmentioned image was given prominence in translation. In this case, these four translations explicated a hidden metaphor “lamp” for “sun”, creating an instance of explanatory coherence.

*Example #14 (Surah An-Naba: 14):*

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا

- R1. And do we not send down from the clouds water in abundance,
- R2. And we send down from the clouds water pouring forth abundantly
- R3. We send down water in torrents wrung from rain clouds
- R4. And sent down heavy rains from the clouds
- R5. And have sent down from the rainy clouds abundant water,
- R6. And we sent down from the heavy Clouds, water in abundance,
- R7. And have sent down out of the rain clouds water cascading

Every entity in this verse has been translated into English in all TTs, which do not give any further information justifying or explicating the proposition. In fact, no further information is needed.

*Example #15 (Surah An-Naba: 15):*

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا

- R1. That we may produce therewith corn and vegetables,
- R2. That we may bring forth thereby corn and herbs
- R3. So we may produce grain and plants with it,
- R4. To make the seeds, plants,
- R5. Thereby to produce grain and plant,
- R6. By which we produce for you corn, fruit and vegetations,
- R7. That we may bring forth thereby grain and plants

The translations do not provide any explanatory coherence. In other words, this verse does not represent any evidence of supplemental coherence in the original.

*Example #16 (Surah An-Naba: 16):*

وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا

- R1. And gardens of luxurious growth?
- R2. And gardens dense and luxuriant
- R3. As well as luxuriant gardens.
- R4. And thick gardens grow?
- R5. And gardens of thick foliage.
- R6. And also gardens of crowded foliage.
- R7. And gardens luxuriant

This verse, like the previous one, does not represent any evidence of supplemental coherence in the original. The translations also do not provide any explanatory coherence.

*Example #17 (Surah An-Naba: 17):*

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفُضْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا

- R1. Verily the Day of Sorting Out is a thing appointed,
- R2. Surely the Day of Decision is (a day) appointed
- R3. The day for sorting has been appointed,
- R4. The Day of Judgment will certainly be the final appointment.
- R5. Lo! the Day of decision is a fixed time,
- R6. But verily, the Day of Separation Between Truth and Falsehood is the promised Day to be met by all Mankind.
- R7. The day of Trumpet is blown, and you shall come in troops

The renditions relied on various images to convey the concept of Judgment Day. At the same time, all the renditions maintain coherence with the ST, except for R4 and R6. In R6, the translator adds further explanation for the concept of “separation” with the descriptive phrase “the promised Day to be met by all mankind”. As a result, the supplemental coherence in the ST is transformed into explanatory coherence in R6. Additionally, R4 explicitly mentions “Day of Judgment” a concept that was implicit in the holy verse.

*Example #18 (Surah An-Naba: 18):*

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَمَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا

- R1. The day that Trumpet shall be sounded and ye shall come forth in crowds;
- R2. The day on which the trumpet shall be blown so you shall come forth in hosts
- R3. The day when the Trumpet shall be blown so you will come in droves,

R4. On the day the trumpet will be sounded and you will come (to Us) in huge groups.

R5. A day when the trumpet is blown and ye come in multitudes,

R6. On the Day the Trumpet will be blown and you shall come out in huge groups;

R7. The day Trumpet is blown and you shall come in troops

There is no evidence of modified coherence in the English renditions of this verse, the reason why “people will come in multitudes” remains unexplained in the translations. In other words, the holy verse contains some supplemental coherence about the Judgment Day, but all of the translations kept it hidden. A reader from a very different culture may not be able to make sense of the relationship between “Trumpet” and “Judgment Day”.

*Example #19 (Surah An-Naba: 19):*

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا

R1. And the heavens shall be opened as if there were doors,

R2. And the heavens shall be opened so that it shall be all openings

R3. And the sky will open up as if it had gates,

R4. The heavens will have openings like doors.

R5. And the heavens is opened and becometh as gates,

R6. And the sky will be opened as if turned into gates (and the Angels descend from them)

R7. And heavens is opened, and become gates.

All renditions represent the ST's concept by the same coherence. R6 gives some extra explanation enclosed in parentheses, changing the balance of supplemental coherence of the ST into an explanatory coherence: “(and the Angels descend from them)”

*Example #20 (Surah An-Naba: 20):*

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا

R1. And the mountains shall vanish, as if they were a mirage.

R2. And the mountains shall be moved off so that they shall remain a mere semblance

R3. And the mountains will travel along as if they were a mirage.

R4. The Mountains will be driven away and become like mirages.

R5. And the hills are set in motion and become as a mirage.

R6. And the mountains will be set in motion And they look like mirage;

R7. And the mountains are set in motion, and become a vapor.

The purpose of this verse is to show the eventual fate of the mountains. Except for some minor omissions in R1, the translations generally depict how the mountains will be destroyed. These omissions, however, are not considered part of coherence because coherence is a macrostructural variable, whereas minor mistakes in rendering a word are microstructural. Therefore, these omissions are not included in the analysis.

## 5. Discussion

In the current study, DTS, proposed by Toury (1995), was used to unravel the essence and mechanisms of translations of sacred scriptures. The paradigm put forth by Toury is based on descriptive research, and DTS was intended to provide a systematic structure to translation studies, endowing translation with scientific prestige. In this context, one of the goals of DTS has been to uncover any regularities that occur in, dominate, or characterize translations (Munday, 2012; Pym, 2010). The central question addressed in DTS is not what translations should be, but what translations are or look like. Therefore, rather than normalizing or prescribing rules, DTS aims to establish a common foundation for studying the very nature of translation without adhering to normative conventions.

The supplemental coherence regarding the question raised at the beginning of Surah An-Naba is maintained in its original form up to the 18th verse. In other words, the answer to the previously mentioned question—“the resurrection day”—is provided in the 18th verse. The modification introduced by R6 significantly impacts the reading and effectiveness of the ST. This is because R6 alters the balance between the question-and-answer exchange in the rhetorical question. Another important point for translation is that the ST does not provide any extra information at this stage. In other words, the rhetorical question does not contain any cultural or textual implicit information, making explanatory coherence seemingly unjustifiable here. Regarding the 19th verse, all renditions maintain the same coherence as the ST; however, R6 offers additional explanation, shifting the balance from supplemental coherence in the ST to explanatory coherence. Finally, regarding the 20th verse, the original coherence is not supplemental, ensuring that the non-Muslim reader will be able to comprehend the message.

### 5.1. Response to the first research question

To answer the first research question, the frequency of each category of coherence was counted, and the findings were recorded in the respective tables. The statistical procedure employed was primarily descriptive, clearly indicating the extent to which each translation conveyed a balanced coherence.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of SC<sup>1</sup> & EC<sup>2</sup> in different renditions

Translation	SC	EC	Total	Percentage
R1	9	4	13	13.7
R2	10	4	14	14.7
R3	10	1	11	11.6
R4	6	8	14	14.7
R5	10	2	12	12.6
R6	1	19	20	21.1
R7	9	2	11	11.6
Total	55	40	95	100.0

<sup>1</sup> supplemental coherence

<sup>2</sup> explanatory coherence

As indicated in Table 1, the frequency distribution of supplemental coherence and explanatory coherence across different renditions suggests that the translations are predominantly supplemental rather than explanatory. However, R6 is the only translation with a significant difference between the frequencies of SC and EC. R4 ranks second, followed by R2 and R1, which share third place. R5 and R7 come next, while R3 ranks last.

### 5.2 Response to the second research question

One of the general universals of translation is explication, which refers to cases where an original text is expanded through translation. On the other hand, a key question in the development of translation studies is the validity of the claims made by DTS. To answer the second research question, only the statistics on explanatory coherence in the translations were considered, as this type of coherence could help test the universality of explication. Providing a clear-cut answer to this question was challenging. Therefore, the results from the descriptive statistics were used for further analysis and discussion to provide a valid response.

Table 2. Percentage of supplemental and explanatory coherence in different renditions

Translation	SC Percentage	EC Percentage
R1	9.5	4.2
R2	10.5	4.2
R3	10.5	1.1
R4	6.3	8.4
R5	10.5	2.1
R6	1.1	20.0
R7	9.5	2.1
Total	57.9	42.1

As shown in Table 2, 57.9% of the cases are SC, indicating a dominant tendency among translators to maintain supplemental coherence. A more detailed comparison involves the standardized information for each coherence type in each translation. Clearly, R1, R2, R3, R5, and R7 have a higher frequency of SC. Furthermore, in R4, the two coherence types are very closely distributed. Interestingly, R6 is the only translation with a significant difference between supplemental coherence (1.1%) and explanatory coherence (20.0%). In fact, we can conclude that the translations largely preserve the supplemental coherence of the original Holy Scripture. This finding somewhat challenges the general notion of the universality of explication proposed by Pym (2010). In reality, the seven renditions of Surah An-Naba in the Holy Qur'an exhibit coherences that are largely similar to the original text. However, in the case of R6, it is clear that the addition of extra information and the provision of explanatory coherence lead to a longer and more detailed coherent rendition.

Translation involves two main processes: reading in the source language and writing in the TL. Any issues that arise in either of these processes can lead to mistranslation. To avoid misunderstandings, it is crucial to understand exactly what needs to be conveyed. Moreover, translation is not merely about finding target-language equivalents for source-language words and phrases; it also encompasses the roles that translation plays in society and the influence society has on translation. Translating different types of texts, each with its own

genre, is important in the field of translation studies. However, translating sacred texts is especially sensitive and significant because these texts engage with ideologies and beliefs. Therefore, a translator of divine texts must be fully aware of the specific challenges and considerations involved in such translations.

In a study on explicitation in translation, Shirinzadeh Bojnourdi et al. (2013) examined an English translation of Sa'di's *Gulistan* by James Ross and found that the translator had extensively used explicitation. However, the study did not provide accurate statistical data to support the findings, which makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions. Therefore, further studies should be conducted to explore this issue more clearly. Generally, scholars in translation studies have come to view explicitation as a natural phenomenon. In the present study, descriptive statistics were used to examine the rate of explicitation. Ultimately, the skill of a good translator lies in transferring cultural or religious expressions from the ST to the TT in a way that is both faithful to the original and comprehensible and acceptable to the target readers. The process of explicitation involved in transferring concepts between Arabic and English shows that, although the two languages have different structures, it is possible to provide an acceptable interpretation for native English speakers seeking to engage with Islamic scriptures.

## **6. Conclusion**

The translation of sacred scriptures is of such importance that foundational translation theories in the Western world have often focused on the translation of such texts. Melis and Albir (2001) identify three possible settings for quality assessment: (1) literary or sacred texts, (2) professional, and (3) pedagogical. Quality assessment in the first setting resembles literary criticism. However, this three-way classification is debatable, as both literary translation and the translation of sacred texts can be considered professional, and the purpose of these two genres may differ significantly (cited in Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013, p. 97). Furthermore, unlike other types of translated texts, sacred texts are deeply sensitive and require meticulous attention and faithfulness. In fact, translators of Holy Scriptures have sometimes faced dire consequences, even being accused of infidelity to the original texts due to perceived mistranslations.

Since this study focuses on the notion of coherence in translating sacred scriptures according to the supplemental and explanatory modes of coherence, it offers a novel contribution to translation studies. This model can significantly assist text analysts in identifying new mechanisms by which texts conceal information and how that information can be appropriately revealed. Additionally, because the study involves translated sacred scriptures, it can provide valuable insights into how interpretative strategies may influence such translations.

The findings of this study have several important implications. The study demonstrates that, even across a relatively large number of translations, there is a general tendency to preserve the original coherence of the verses. The renditions indicate that the holy verses contain significant implicit information, which leads translators to maintain supplemental coherence. Another key implication is that explicitation (or explication) may not necessarily be accepted as a universal translation strategy. While translation theory has proposed this idea, the results suggest that, in the case of sacred texts, translators may be reluctant to adopt text-expanding strategies, opting instead to closely reproduce the form of the original. Clearly, this issue warrants further research to be more conclusively established.



The present study offers several contributions to language practitioners. It can help expand or validate the claims of DTS, particularly concerning the notion of explication. The findings can provide cultural theorists of translation with valuable insights into how sacred scriptures are translated across cultures. Additionally, the results can significantly assist translation trainers and educators, as the study addresses a highly complex and challenging issue. Moreover, the study can provide useful perspectives for religious text interpreters, highlighting how their work may differ from the tasks of a translator.

One of the major limitations of this study was the relatively small size of the corpus. It is almost certain that the results could have been more reliable if the research had been extended to include more chapters of the Noble Qur'an. However, increasing the scope of the study would have imposed additional time constraints on the researcher, making it difficult to complete the study within a reasonable timeframe. Moreover, extending the duration of the research would have incurred additional costs, presenting another limitation in meeting the research deadlines. In addition to these practical constraints, working on religious texts requires careful attention to avoid writing anything that could disturb followers of a particular faith or provoke strong opposition. Researchers in this area must maintain impartiality and refrain from supporting any side of a theological debate. This concern may explain why some translators, perhaps due to these sensitivities, prefer not to alter the source language content significantly, choosing instead to remain loyal to the original text. Given these challenges, it would be beneficial for future researchers to extend this study to other chapters of the Noble Qur'an. Such studies could provide complementary findings, helping to validate the results of this research and further enhance the understanding of how religious texts are translated. These future efforts could also contribute to the improvement of translations of religious texts, ensuring they are both faithful to the original and accessible to a wider audience.

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## Comparing English and Persian Translations of Culture-Specific Items in the Surah Al-An'am

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### ABSTRACT

Each culture encompasses unique concepts that can be challenging for outsiders to grasp, often due to their deep-rooted connotations within the source language and culture. Various strategies exist for translating culture-specific items. This descriptive-comparative study examines the strategies employed in the Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English translations of Surah Al-An'am. This surah is one of the Tiwal suras, which are seven lengthy surahs in the Holy Qur'an. Its complete recitation in one sitting, known as *Khatme Anaam* (complete recitation of Al-An'am Surah), is a common practice in Iran, performed with the hope of having one's prayers answered by God. The Persian translation analyzed in this study was by Mohammad Mehdi Fooladvand, one of the top eight translators of the Holy Qur'an, recognized for his balanced approach between literal and content-based translation. The English version studied was by Mustafa Khattab, a Canadian-Egyptian translator renowned for *The Clear Qur'an*. The translation strategies for culture-specific items were evaluated using frameworks proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet, Newmark, and Nida. The analysis identified 50 culture-specific items in the surah. The findings revealed that both translations predominantly employed the strategy of literal translation, while footnotes and modulation were the least utilized. Statistical tests, including log-likelihood for significance and Bayes Factor for effect size, indicated significant differences between the two translations regarding the use of seven strategies. Notably, the strategies of borrowing and functional equivalence provided strong evidence against the null hypothesis.

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## 1. Introduction

Translating content from one language to another inherently involves culture, as each language is deeply intertwined with its cultural context (Nagar, 2018). Culture-specific items (CSIs) are words or phrases that convey unique concepts, meanings, or functions within a particular culture, making them challenging to translate accurately (Baker, 1992). These CSIs often reflect cultural phenomena tied to a population's distinctive characteristics, national identity, and historical background, often lacking direct equivalents in other languages (Vlakhov & Florin, 1990). Beyond their lexical function, CSIs contribute to creating a specific atmosphere within a unique context (Borysenko et al., 2024). To operationally define CSIs in Islamic texts, a frequently referenced source is *The Dictionary of Islamic Words and Expressions* by Mohammad Saleh (2011).

The importance of translating CSIs has been recognized across various fields, including science, education, and media (Aldahesh, 2016). As noted by Hatim and Mason (2016), when translators convert content from a source language to a target language, they are not merely transferring words but also culturally embedded concepts. These intercultural differences can present significant challenges, as deeply rooted cultural ideas often resist straightforward translation (Ayyad et al., 2020). In literature and religious texts, accurately translating CSIs becomes even more critical, as using an inappropriate strategy can mislead readers or alter the intended meaning (Moradi & Sadeghi, 2014).

When translating the Holy Qur'ān, unique sensitivities arise due to its sacred nature, and many question the credibility of translated versions (Siddiek, 2012). Some scholars and believers even argue that the Qur'ān is fundamentally non-translatable, emphasizing that its divine essence cannot be fully conveyed in another language (Moir, 2009; Abdul-Raof, 2018). Despite these challenges, others, such as Abdul-Raof (2001), contend that translating the Qur'ān can foster cross-cultural understanding, enriching both the source and target cultures. As previously mentioned, translating sacred texts presents unique challenges, particularly when dealing with CSIs (Tabrizi & Mahmud, 2013). The primary difficulty stems from the lack of direct one-to-one equivalents for many CSIs in the target language and culture. Translators must therefore carefully select the most appropriate method to convey the intended meaning to readers (Ayyad & Mahadi, 2019). To assist with this, various dictionaries clarify CSIs and help ensure accurate translations (Ali et al., 2012). In the context of the Qur'ān, mistranslating CSIs can lead to significant distortions of meaning, making a deep understanding of both cultures essential (Obeidat & Mahadi, 2019). As Al-Azzam et al. (2015) suggest, effective translation strategies can help convey meanings that closely align with the original text, preserving cultural themes and intent.

Several strategic frameworks have been proposed to address the challenges of CSI translation and mitigate the risk of losing cultural meaning. This study employs frameworks developed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) and Newmark (1988), which share some common approaches. Ten translation strategies were analyzed in this research, including footnotes, explicitation, generalization, literal (direct) translation, modulation, functional equivalents, cultural equivalents, borrowing, definitions, and descriptions. These strategies are briefly defined below. These strategies can be used alone or in combination in translating culture specific items from one language to another (Braçaj, 2015).

Table 1. Translation strategies of culture specific items adapted from Braçaj (2015) and Ayyad et al. (2021)

Translation strategies for CSIs	Description
Footnote	use of statements of different length always connected to more or less definite parts of the text and usually found printed down the page
Explicitation	a shift in translation from what is implicit in the source text to what is explicit in the target text
Generalization	use of any linguistic element, ranging from a word to a paragraph or even a discourse to convey a meaning that is more general, vaguer or broader into the target text than that in the source text
Literal translation	a word-for-word translation with no lexical word or structure alterations
Modulation	a variation of the form of message, obtained by a change in the point of view
Functional equivalence	a type of equivalence reflected in the target text which seeks to adapt the function of the original to suit the specific context for which it was produced
Cultural equivalence	replacing the CSI in the source language with a CSI in the target language
Borrowing	taking a word from the source language and maintaining it in the target language
Definition	reducing the unknown to the known and the unshared to the shared
Description	use of generic terms (not culturally loaded elements) to convey the meaning of a CSI.

Given the intricate relationship between language and culture, as well as the need to carefully consider cultural concepts and local interpretations in translation, this study aims to examine the strategies employed in translating CSIs in the Holy Qur'ān. The significance of this research is twofold. First, there is a limited body of work focusing on the translation of CSIs in sacred texts, particularly the Holy Qur'ān. Second, the specific sura under investigation holds significant importance and popularity in Iranian religious contexts. This sura is frequently recited, studied, and reflected upon in both religious and public gatherings in Iran, highlighting the need for an in-depth analysis of its translation. The widespread recitation of Surah Al-An'am in Iran underscores the necessity of closely examining its translations. Furthermore, the absence of prior academic research on the translation of CSIs in this sura provided strong motivation for conducting this study. Notably, the researchers extended their analysis beyond Arabic-to-Persian translation, also exploring Arabic-to-English translation. They then compared the prevalence of CSI translation strategies in both contexts. Based on this scope, the following research questions were formulated:

✓ RQ1: What is the distribution of CSI translation strategies in the Arabic-to-Persian translation of Surah Al-An'am?

✓ RQ2: What is the distribution of CSI translation strategies in the Arabic-to-English translation of Surah Al-An'am?

✓ RQ3: Is there a statistically significant difference in the use of CSI translation strategies between the Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English translations of Surah Al-An'am?

The first two research questions are exploratory, while the third is analytical and comparative. For the third question, a null hypothesis is proposed: There is no statistically significant difference in the use of CSI translation strategies between the Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English translations of Surah Al-An'am.

## 2. Literature review

The cultural shift in translation studies over recent years (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990; Bassnett, 2007) has emphasized the importance of considering not only the source and target languages but also the cultural nuances embedded within them (Venuti, 1995). Various approaches have been proposed to address linguistic and cultural challenges in fields such as translation studies, ethnolinguistics, and linguo-culturology (Mizin et al., 2021; Mizin et al., 2023). In translated texts, it is essential to consider both the denotative meaning of terms and their cultural connotations. Therefore, both researchers and translators focus on the processes involved in conveying culturally specific information encoded within terms (Cómitre Narváez & Valverde Zambrana, 2014; Muñoz, 2019; Newmark, 1988; Valeišaitė, 2022; Slavova & Vozna, 2022).

Although significant research has been conducted on CSIs across various types of texts, there remains a notable lack of empirical data on their translation in Quranic verses, particularly in comparative studies. The Qur'ān, the central religious text of Islam, was originally revealed in Arabic and has since been translated into numerous languages, including Persian, English, French, and Spanish, to convey God's message and promote the religion (Peachy, 2013). Translators of the Qur'ān strive to remain faithful to the source language, resulting in translations that are predominantly source-language oriented (Al-Qinai, 2012).

The act of translating the Qur'ān has sparked considerable debate among Islamic scholars. Allaity (2014) emphasized the immense challenge this task poses for linguists and translators. Nida and Reyburn (1981) described this challenge as "formal overloading," while Moir (2009) argued that translation could compromise the authenticity and authority of the Qur'ān. Abdul-Raof (2018) suggested that achieving a non-Arabic version parallel to the original is feasible but remains imperfect. The Qur'ān's distinctive linguistic and stylistic features present significant hurdles for translators (Ali et al., 2012). As Rahman (1988) asserted, translations of the Qur'ān into other languages are unlikely to fully capture its essence.

Dastjerdi and Jamshidian (2011) also contended that the Qur'ān's content is inherently untranslatable. According to Saeed (2008), this untranslatability stems from the Qur'ān's divine nature and unique linguistic style, which defies replication. Even within its original Arabic, paraphrasing is considered impossible. Consequently, while translations serve as valuable tools for conveying meaning, they can never replace the original text (Aldahesh, 2014).

Moradi and Sadeghi (2014) examined the strategies employed in translating CSIs in three English translations of the Holy Qur'ān, focusing on the frequency of these strategies. The study analyzed terms related to Islamic law in the original Arabic text, using Khoramshahi's

strategic model. These terms were compared with their equivalents in the English translations by Shakir, Yusuf Ali, and Pickthall. Data collection involved randomly selecting chapter thirty of the Qur'ān, identifying CSIs within this chapter, and comparing them to their English counterparts to determine the translation strategies used. The frequency analysis revealed that the most common strategies were literal translation, definition, and borrowing, respectively.

Chalak et al. (2019) investigated the role of CSIs in the English translation of the Holy Qur'ān by Irving, focusing on the strategies applied in translating these items. This descriptive study drew data from the longest surah, *Al-Baqarah*. Venuti's domestication and foreignization model served as the theoretical framework for the analysis. The study utilized descriptive statistics to report the frequency and percentage of each strategy. Results indicated that domestication was the predominant strategy used by the translator for rendering CSIs. The findings offer valuable insights for translation studies students and practitioners, highlighting effective strategies for translating culture-specific concepts.

Ayyad et al. (2021) explored the strategies used in translating CSIs from Arabic to English in the Holy Qur'ān, aiming to identify the most frequently applied strategies. Their study focused on CSIs from *Surah Al-Ma'idah* and examined their English translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. They identified ten translation strategies, including functional equivalents, cultural equivalents, modulation, borrowing, definition, generalization, description, footnotes, and explicitation. The findings revealed that the most frequently used strategy was definition, while generalization and explicitation were the least employed.

More recently, Roodashsty et al. (2023) conducted research on the translation of CSIs in the *Al-Baqarah*, *Ali 'Imran*, and *An-Nisa* surahs of the Qur'ān. They analyzed these translations using Ghazala's (2008) model of translation strategies, which is based on Newmark's (1988) framework. This study involved translations by English speakers from different linguistic backgrounds—British, Persian, and Arabic. The most commonly applied strategy across all translations was cultural equivalence. Despite this, the researchers noted that inadequate paratextual references could lead to subtle shifts in meaning, even when cultural concepts were successfully conveyed. Their results highlighted how the translators' linguistic backgrounds influenced their approaches to translating religious texts.

What sets the present study apart from previous research is its comprehensive scope. Firstly, it considers both Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English translations, making it comparative-analytic rather than merely descriptive. Secondly, the study focuses on translations by some of the most renowned translators of religious texts, particularly the Holy Qur'ān. Thirdly, the chosen sura holds exceptional cultural and religious significance in Iran, where families often hold special recitation gatherings dedicated to this sura at regular intervals. This unique context underscores the importance of accurately conveying its cultural and linguistic nuances.

### 3. Methodology

In light of the above-mentioned review of literature, the present study aimed to explore the distribution of strategies used to translate CSIs in Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English translations of *Al-An'am* sura, and compare the two to find where the statistically significant divergences. The design of study, material and data collection and analysis are introduced here.

### 3.1. Research design

In line with the purpose of research, a quantitative study was designed to explore the strategies of translating CSIs in two versions of the translated sura. Descriptive statistics were used to report the distribution of translation strategies. To this aim, frequency and percentage were used. Besides the descriptive design, the present study was also analytic-comparative in that it tried to find where the statistically significant differences between the two versions of translation lay (i.e., Arabic-to-Persian vs. Arabic-to-English). Among the three categories of analyzing source texts suggested by Holmes (1972), that is product-based, descriptive translation studies, function-based descriptive translation studies and process-based descriptive translation studies, the present study was of the product-based category as it dealt with describing translations, comparing two translations of the source text and describing the larger corpora of translation.

### 3.2. Corpus

In the present study, the translation of Al-An'am sura was analyzed. This surah is one of the Tiwal suras, which are seven lengthy surahs in the Holy Qur'an. Its complete recitation in one sitting, known as *Khatme Anaam* (complete recitation of Al-An'am Surah), is a common practice in Iran, performed with the hope of having one's prayers answered by God. In the present study, two translations of Surah Al-An'am were analyzed and compared. The Arabic-to-Persian translation was by Muhammad Mahdi Fooladvand, recognized as one of the top eight translations of the Holy Qur'an. His translation style strikes a balance between verbatim accuracy and content-based interpretation. The English translation selected was by Mustafa Khattab, a renowned Canadian-Egyptian translator known for his *The Clear Qur'an* series, celebrated for its accessible and contemporary approach to rendering the Qur'an's message.

### 3.3. Data collection and analysis

The data for this study were collected at a micro level. According to Saldanha and O'Brien (2013), micro-level data focus on individual elements, such as words or specific texts, and may involve examining the use of particular translation strategies or measuring the time required to render a text. In this study, the data were sourced from *Surah Al-An'am* in the Holy Qur'an, with its Persian and English translations serving as the target texts. To operationally define CSIs, the *Dictionary of Islamic Words and Expressions* (Saleh, 2011) was consulted. Additionally, a native Arabic speaker with 40 years of experience residing in Iran was consulted to validate the selection of CSIs. The identified CSIs were then transliterated using the tool available at <https://transliterate.arabicalphabet.net/>, as illustrated in Table 2.

For the analysis, frameworks proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) and Newmark (1988) were employed, given their complementary nature and overlapping strategies. In total, ten translation strategies for CSIs were analyzed: footnote, explicitation, generalization, literal (direct) translation, modulation, functional equivalent, cultural equivalent, borrowing, definition, and description, as outlined in Table 1. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data. The distribution of translation strategies in the Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English samples was presented in terms of frequency and percentage. To assess the statistical significance of differences between the two translations, the log-likelihood ratio was calculated, and the Bayes factor was estimated to evaluate the effect size, providing evidence against the null hypothesis.



## 4. Results

### 4.1. Overall analysis

The initial search for CSIs in the source text, conducted by the present researchers with the assistance of a native Arabic speaker residing in Iran, resulted in the identification of 50 CSIs including 31 unique CSIs, some appearing multiple times. These items were then reviewed in both the Persian and English translations. Table 2 presents the CSIs identified in the source text.

Table 2. CSIs in the Surah Al-An'am

CSI	Frequency	CSI	Frequency
أَجَل	3	عَدَاه	1
قِرطاس	2	عَشَى	1
وَلَى	2	حُكْم	3
أُمِرْتُ	1	مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ	1
يَوْمَ عَظِيمٍ	1	مَوْتٍ	1
لَلْبَسِنَا	1	وَكَيْلٍ	3
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ	1	حَدِيثٍ	1
الْكِتَابِ	10	شَيْطَانٍ	1
النَّارِ	1	صَلَاةٍ	3
دَارِ الْآخِرَةِ	1	صُورٍ	1
تَبَا	1	أَصْنَامٍ	1
صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ	2	تُبُؤُهُ	1
السَّاعَةِ	1	أُمِّ الْقُرَى	1
مُرْسَلِينَ	1	دَارِ السَّلَامِ	1
خَزَائِنِ	1	سَيِّئِهِ	1

As shown in Table 2, the frequency of CSIs ranged from 1 to 10. The most frequent CSI in Surah Al-An'am was the word "الكتاب" referring to the "Holy Qur'an". Various translation strategies were applied to render this word in different verses of the Surah. The same approach was taken for other CSIs that appeared multiple times. Table 3 illustrates the distribution of strategies used to translate these CSIs, along with the frequency and percentage of each translation strategy in both the Persian and English versions.

The first column on the left lists the ten strategies for translating CSIs. The middle column displays the frequency and percentage of each strategy used in the Arabic-to-Persian translation. The column on the right presents the frequency and percentage of each strategy applied in the Arabic-to-English translation. This data is essential for addressing the first and second research questions. The following figure shows a horizontal bar chart comparing the distribution of CSI translation strategies between the Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English translations.

Table 3. Distribution of translation strategies in Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English content

Translation strategies	Frequency in Arabic-to-Persian	Frequency in Arabic-to-English
Footnote	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Explication	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
Generalization	4 (8%)	3 (6%)
Literal translation	24 (48%)	26 (52%)
Modulation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Functional equivalence	6 (12%)	15(30%)
Cultural equivalence	3 (6%)	1 (2%)
Borrowing	8(16%)	0 (0%)
Definition	2 (4%)	3 (6%)
Description	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Total	50 (100%)	50 (100%)

Figure 1 clearly highlights the differences between the two translation samples in terms of the strategies used. As shown, literal translation was the most commonly applied strategy for translating CSIs in both the Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English groups. Footnote and modulation strategies were not used in either sample. Therefore, out of the ten strategies, only eight were utilized in translating CSIs into Persian and English. This study addressed three research questions, and their answers are presented below.

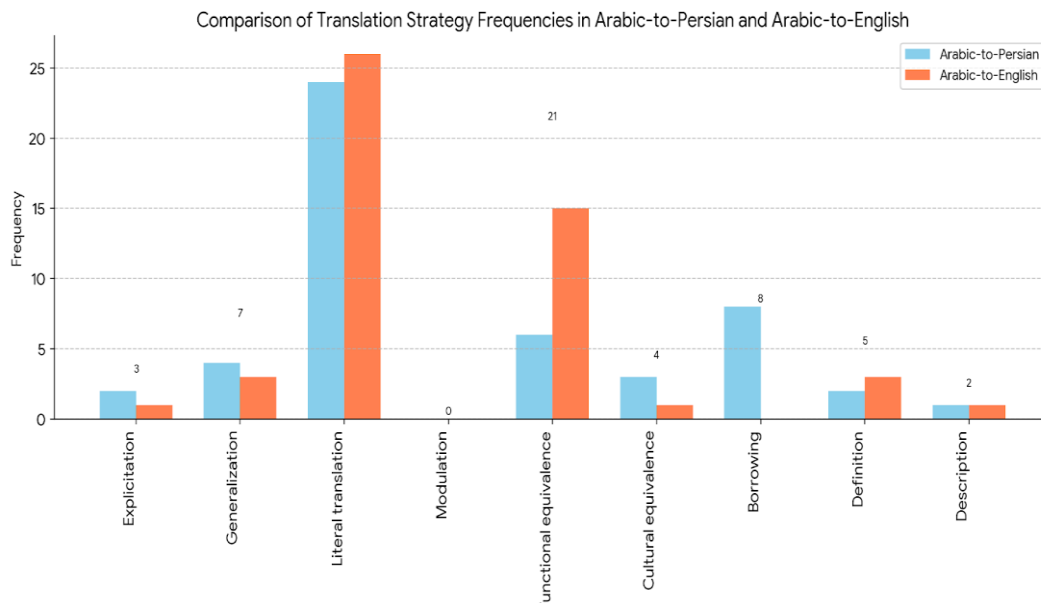


Figure 1. Translation strategies in Arabic-to-English and Arabic-to-Persian content

#### 4.2. Answer to the first research question

The initial research question examined the distribution of CSI strategies employed in translating the Arabic version of Sura Al-An'am into Persian. To address this inquiry, reference can be made to Table 3, as well as Figure 2, which presents a pie chart illustrating the distribution of CSI translation strategies within the Arabic-to-Persian translation sample.

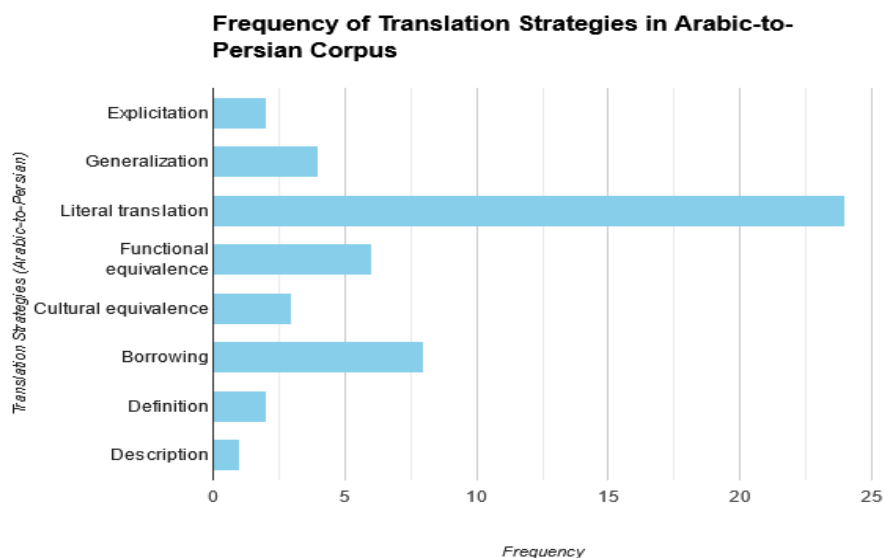


Figure 2. Translation strategies in the Arabic-to-Persian sample

As illustrated, literal translation emerged as the predominant strategy, applied in nearly half of the cases (48%) for translating CSIs. The following examples further demonstrate this approach:

موت (ST) → مرگ (TT)

يوم القيامة (ST) → روز قیامت (TT)

The second most frequently employed strategy for translating CSIs into Persian was borrowing, accounting for 16% of the cases. This strategy involves transferring a word directly from the source language into the target language while preserving its original form or pronunciation. The following examples from the translation of Sura Al-An'am illustrate the use of this approach:

الكتاب (ST) → کتاب (TT)

ولياً (ST) → ولی (TT)

Following literal translation and borrowing, functional equivalence was the third most frequently utilized strategy for translating CSIs in the Arabic-to-Persian sample, comprising 12% of the cases. This approach involves replacing a CSI with a term in the target language that performs a similar cultural or contextual function. The following examples from the Persian translation of Sura Al-An'am illustrate this strategy:

لَلْبَسَا (ST) → مشتبه ساختیم (TT)

السَّاعَةِ (ST) → رستاخیز (TT)

The next strategy employed in translating CSIs from Arabic to Persian was generalization (8%). This strategy involves using a broader term in place of a more specific word or expression from the source language. Below are two examples from the Arabic-to-Persian translations of Al-An'am:

أجل (ST) → مدت (TT)

حديث (ST) → سخن (TT)

Cultural equivalence was the next strategy used in the Persian translation of Al-An'am, accounting for 6% of cases. This strategy involves replacing the CSI from the source language with a corresponding CSI in the target language. Below are two examples from the translation:

يوم عظيم (ST) → قيامت (TT)

قِرطاس (ST) → کاغذ (TT)

The next two strategies, each used in 4% of cases in the Persian translation of CSIs, were explicitation and definition. Explicitation involves making what is implicit in the source text explicit in the target text, while definition entails converting the unknown to the known and the unshared to the shared. An example of explicitation in the Arabic-to-Persian translation is "أم القرى" (ST) → "مکه" (TT), and an example of definition is "اجل" (ST) → "هنگام یا زمان معین" (TT). The use of other strategies was minimal and negligible.

#### 4.3. Answer to the second research question

The second research question focused on the distribution of CSI strategies used in translating the Arabic version of Al-An'am sura into English. To answer this question, refer to Table 3 and Figure 3, which presents a pie chart illustrating the distribution of CSI translation strategies in the Arabic-to-English sample.

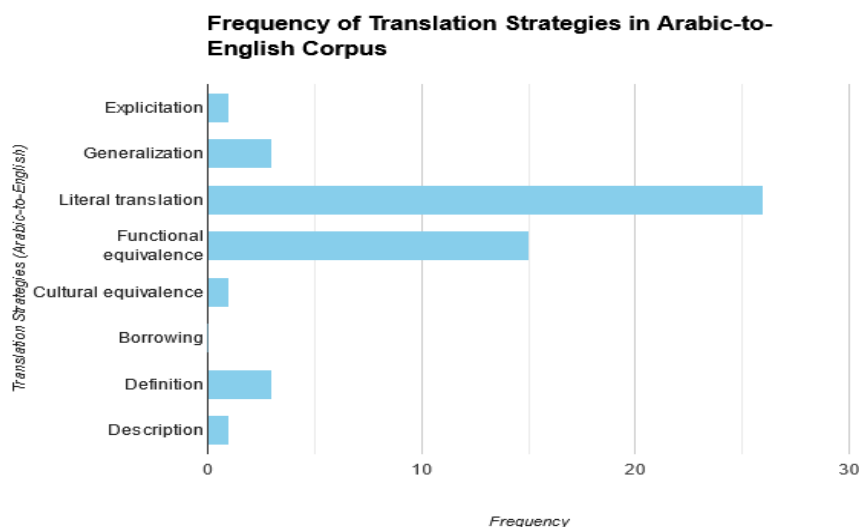


Figure 3. Translation strategies in the Arabic to English sample

As observed, the frequency of the ten strategies used in the Arabic-to-English translation follows this order: literal translation > functional equivalence > definition, generalization > explicitation, cultural equivalence, description. Three strategies were not used at all: footnote, borrowing, and modulation. Notably, in more than half of the cases (52%), literal translation was the most commonly used strategy for translating CSIs. Below are two examples from the translation of CSIs from Arabic to English:

اجل (ST) → death (TT)

يوم العظيم (ST) → tremendous day (TT)

The next common strategy was functional equivalence. It accounted for 30% of strategies used for translating CSIs in the Arabic to English sample. Here are two examples from the text:

الصور (ST) → trumpet (TT)

وكيل (ST) → keeper (TT)

Less than a quarter of the remaining CSIs were translated using the strategies of definition (6%), generalization (6%), explicitation (2%), cultural equivalence (2%), and description (2%). The corresponding examples for these strategies are as follows:

- **definition:** دار الآخرة (ST) → eternal home of the hereafter (TT)
- **generalization:** الكتاب (ST) → scripture (TT)
- **explicitation:** حكم (ST) → power (TT)
- **cultural equivalence:** يوم القيامة (ST) → day of judgment (TT)
- **description:** قرطاس (ST) → revelation in writing (TT)

As previously mentioned, three strategies were not used at all: footnote, modulation, and borrowing.

#### 4.4. Answer to the third research question

The third research question investigated the differences in the use of CSI translation strategies between the two samples (i.e., Arabic-to-Persian vs. Arabic-to-English). To explore this, Figure 1 can be referenced again, which shows that only seven of the ten strategies are comparable between the two groups. Two strategies (footnote and modulation) were absent in both samples, and one strategy (description) was used to the same degree in both. The remaining seven strategies were present in different distributions, allowing for a comparison between the two translations. A null hypothesis was formulated, claiming that there was no statistically significant difference between the two samples in the use of CSI translation strategies. The significance of the frequency differences was tested using the loglikelihood method (Table 4). Significance and effect size (Bayes factor) were estimated using the SigEff.xlsx spreadsheet, which can be downloaded at this link. According to the

instructions, the critical value of LL for  $p < 0.05$  is 3.84, and the effect size thresholds are interpreted as follows: 0–2: negligible; 2–6: moderate effect; 6–10: high effect; >10: very high effect.

Table 4. Log-likelihood analysis of differences in the distribution of translation strategies between Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English translations

Translation strategies	Frequency of data	
	Log-likelihood	Bayes factor
Explicitation	6.36	3.90
Generalization	7.01	4.72
Literal translation	4.87	1.74
Functional equivalence	13.64	20.13
Cultural equivalence	8.90	8.54
Borrowing	13.89	22.67
Definition	7.11	4.50

It can be concluded that the differences in the frequency of using the seven strategies were statistically significant. However, regarding the effect size of these differences, the evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis was very strong for functional equivalence and borrowing (Bayes factor > 10), strong for generalization and cultural equivalence (Bayes factor 6-10), moderate for explicitation, generalization, and definition (Bayes factor 2-6), and negligible for literal translation (Bayes factor 0-2).

### 5. Discussion and conclusion

Given the intricate relationship between culture and language and the importance of translating religious texts, this study aimed to examine the translation of CSIs in Surah Al-An'am, one of the longest chapters of the Holy Qur'an. The research explored and compared the distribution of CSI translation strategies in both Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English translations. Notably, two strategies—footnotes and modulation—were not used in either translation. This aligns with findings from previous studies (e.g., Moradi & Sadeghi, 2014; Ayyad et al., 2021; Roodashsty et al., 2023), which also reported minimal use of these strategies. The limited use of footnotes may be due to the need for extended explanations, which could disrupt the reader's comprehension flow within the text. The avoidance of modulation might stem from its requirement to modify terms, a practice that could be contentious when translating sensitive religious texts such as the Qur'an.

Results revealed that literal translation was the most frequently employed strategy for CSIs in both the Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English versions, accounting for approximately half of the translated items. This finding aligns with Moradi and Sadeghi (2014), who also identified literal translation as the predominant strategy in three English translations of the Holy Qur'an. The widespread use of literal translation likely reflects its minimal alteration of the original terms, making it a safer choice given the sensitivity of translating the Qur'an (Saeed, 2008; Dastjerdi & Jamshidian, 2011). The frequency of other strategies was considerably lower in both the Persian and English translations, suggesting a preference for preserving the original meaning and structure as closely as possible when dealing with culturally loaded terms in sacred texts.

The broader use of literal translation is often justified by the translator's careful attention to conveying the immediate intended meaning of terms. For instance, translating “صلاة” as “prayer” is an appropriate choice. However, there are instances in both Arabic-to-Persian and Arabic-to-English translations where a literal translation could have been enhanced by a more clarifying approach for translating CSIs. For example, in Persian, “الكتاب” was translated in several instances as “کتاب” or “کتاب [آسمانی]”, whereas it could have been more accurately translated as “قرآن”, which was implied. In the English translation, the 40th verse of the sura features “الساعة”, translated as “the hour”. This literal translation fails to convey the intended meaning, which refers to the time of death. The translator could have employed other strategies, such as explicitation or description, to better express the intended message.

Comparative findings revealed significant differences between the two translations in their use of various strategies. Strong evidence was found to reject the null hypothesis regarding the use of borrowing and functional equivalence strategies in the two study samples. Borrowing was not utilized at all in the English translation, while it appeared in 16% of CSI translations from Arabic to Persian. This discrepancy can be attributed to the greater similarities between Arabic and Persian compared to those between Arabic and English. The use of borrowing is justifiable when the two languages share many words or roots. In terms of functional equivalence, the results indicated that this strategy was employed much more frequently in Arabic-to-English translations than in Arabic-to-Persian. A closer examination revealed that when the Persian translator opted for borrowing, the English translator often preferred functional equivalence. For example, the Persian translator rendered “صور” as “صور”, while the English translator chose “trumpet”. Similarly, when the Persian translator used “وکیل” for “الوکیل”, the English translator opted for “maintainer” and “keeper”.

In conclusion, the translations of Al-An'am from Arabic to Persian and Arabic to English employed eight strategies for translating CSIs: explicitation, generalization, literal translation, functional equivalence, cultural equivalence, borrowing, definition, and description. However, literal translation was the most prevalent strategy in both samples. This dominance suggests that there are still significant reservations about translating religious texts, particularly the Holy Qur'an. Translators appear to have limited freedom in utilizing the variety of strategies available to convey the meaning of CSIs. Certain strategies, such as footnotes or modulation, are often overlooked, even though, according to Haroon (2019), they could enhance readers' understanding of the translated text. In this study, there were cases where more effective strategies than literal translation could have been employed to convey the intended meaning. The surah Al-An'am is a widely recited sura in Iran and is one of the longest suras in the Holy Qur'an. Given its frequent public recitation, it is crucial to convey the intended meaning of its content as effectively as possible. The sura contains numerous CSIs, some of which appear as many as ten times. Improving the quality of CSI translation is essential for enhancing the comprehension of the intended cultural connotations. Simply providing the denotative meaning of CSIs does not capture their deeper significance; therefore, a thoughtful and effective use of a wide range of strategies is necessary to convey the Lord's intended meaning in a manner that is accessible to readers.

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## Comparing Human and ChatGPT 3.5 Translation Strategies for Hidden Proverbs in the Qur'ān

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Translation Strategies.

### ABSTRACT

The Qur'ān is not only rich in linguistic construction but also deeply embedded with cultural and religious meanings, making its translation a challenging task. Among the many intricate linguistic features of the Qur'ān, proverbs, especially hidden proverbs, present one of the most significant challenges for translators. These proverbs carry culture-specific meanings that are often difficult to render accurately in other languages and are hidden due to their indirect nature, which can be challenging for readers to understand (Esmaeili, 1986). This study aims to identify and analyze hidden proverbs in the Qur'ān through translations generated by artificial intelligence (GPT-3.5) and by a human translator, Qarai's English translation. The research adopts a descriptive-qualitative method, analyzing twenty-one Qur'ānic verses containing hidden proverbs. These 21 hidden proverbs were extracted from a technical source on Qur'ānic proverbs (Esmaeili, 1986). The study evaluated the translation strategies used by both GPT-3.5 and Qarai, examining how effectively each approach conveys the figurative and cultural meanings of the proverbs. Through comparative analysis, this research investigated the strengths and limitations of AI-generated translations versus human translations in handling cultural-specific linguistic elements. The findings reveal that GPT-3.5 demonstrated strong performance in applying Beekman and Callow's (1974) translation strategies, particularly in cases where the source language proverbs were untranslatable and required a non-figurative explanation. Compared to the human translator, GPT-3.5 provided more consistent and contextually appropriate solutions to the challenge of translating hidden proverbs. These results highlight the growing potential of AI-assisted translation tools in addressing complex linguistic and cultural challenges, suggesting promising advancements in the field of Qur'ānic translation.

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## **1. Introduction**

The Qur'ān, the holy book of Islam, is considered the word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It contains numerous proverbs and sayings that hold deep cultural, religious, and moral significance for Muslims. Translating these proverbs into other languages, including English, is essential for non-Arabic speakers to understand and appreciate the teachings of the Qur'ān. With advancements in technology, ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) translation has emerged as an alternative to human translation. Proverbs, which are among the most challenging and culture-specific language elements, are particularly difficult to translate. These proverbs are also considered rhetorical features in linguistic expression. Today, computer-assisted translation tools and powerful online platforms have become popular and widely used. The advent of ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence tools represents an important development. Utilizing this chatbot in the translation of highly sensitive texts, such as the Holy Qur'ān, holds significant potential for expanding accessibility and understanding.

The research problem to be investigated is the capability of ChatGPT in translating proverbs, which are among the most challenging linguistic elements, particularly within the Qur'ān as a unique text. This study will analyze whether ChatGPT translates these linguistic elements accurately according to the theoretical framework provided by Beekman and Callow's (1974) translation strategies for proverbs.

The significance of this study lies in demonstrating ChatGPT's potential as an advanced technological tool for translating the Qur'ān, a text regarded as timeless and universally relevant. The researcher assumes that the Qur'ān's unique nature presents a considerable challenge, even for the most advanced translation technologies.

This research aims to compare the strategies used by ChatGPT and a human translator in translating Qur'ānic proverbs. Given ChatGPT's reputed impact on various facets of human life, including language translation, it is important to assess the extent of its effectiveness in handling sensitive and complex texts. To meet the research goals, the study applies Beekman and Callow's (1974) model for translating proverbs, which includes the following strategies: 1) introducing the words following the proverb as its intended meaning; 2) substituting with an equivalent proverb in the target language; and 3) providing a straightforward, non-figurative explanation of the proverb.

## **2. Review of the Literature**

### *2.1. Translating the Holy Qur'ān*

Various Qur'ānic scholars have deliberated on the challenges of translating the Holy Qur'ān into other languages. Certain verses within the Qur'ān emphasize the uniqueness and originality of its Arabic text. Based on these verses, some scholars in Qur'ānic studies argue that the Qur'ān is an unparalleled and essentially untranslatable text (Malmkjaer & Windle, 2011).

This perspective rests on the idea that any attempt to translate the Qur'ān, thereby substituting the original Arabic divine text with other languages, could be seen as distorting or altering Allah's Word. This stems from the inherent complexity and binding nature of the Qur'ānic text and structure. The culture-specific concepts embedded within religious texts present a considerable challenge for translators, as achieving true equivalence is often

impossible, making it difficult to convey the precise meaning of Qur'ānic words in the target text. Therefore, both the content and the context of the Qur'ān contribute to the formidable difficulty of translation (Abdul-Raof, 2001; Siddiek, 2012; Long, 2005).

Siddiek (2012) asserts that translating the Qur'ān into other languages is impractical because complete substitution of Allah's words is unattainable. Revealed in Arabic to the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'ān has a unique eloquence and linguistic beauty that cannot be fully replicated in other languages. As a result, Qur'ānic translations primarily serve to aid non-Arabic speakers in understanding the meaning of the text, rather than capturing its full linguistic essence.

By examining various translations of the Qur'ān that recognize the challenge of untranslatability, it becomes clear that titles are carefully chosen to emphasize meaning rather than direct translation of the Glorious Qur'ān. For example, Yusuf Ali's (2010) English translation is titled *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, and Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan's (2000) version is referred to as *The Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'ān in the English Language*.

The primary goal of Qur'ān translators is to convey the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān without attempting to substitute it, aiming for an approximation of the source text meanings in the target language. This approach potentially legitimizes Qur'ān translation efforts. However, due to the Qur'ān's sensitive nature, translators must make every effort to minimize errors, being aware of both the textual and contextual challenges in the translation process. According to Abdul-Raof (2001), the limitations of translating the Qur'ān include "style, stylistic mechanisms of stress, word order, cultural voids, problems of literal translation, syntactic and semantic ambiguity, emotive Qur'ānic expressions, disagreements among translators, different exegetical analyses, and morphological patterns" (p. 1). He further asserts that the most significant challenge for a Qur'ān translator is "linguistic and historical Qur'ān-specific texture" (p. 1). Abdul-Raof (2005) argues that the Holy Qur'ān possesses a unique discourse, marked by textual standards such as explicit coherence and intertextuality, which are evident across narrative, descriptive, and argumentative sections. Cohesion, informativity, intentionality, and acceptability are all intrinsic to the Qur'ānic text as well.

## 2.2. *Qur'ānic Proverbs*

Proverbs are widely regarded as one of the most important intellectual tools for expressing life experiences, including grief, happiness, hardships, and more. As such, they reflect cultural elements that embody the depth of human thoughts and behaviors (Al-Zein, 2009, as cited in Hassan and Lutfi Hossein, 2021). According to Mieder (2004), "A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk that contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form, handed down from generation to generation" (p. 3, as cited in Hassan and Lutfi Hossein, 2021).

### 2.2.1. Al-Mathal (Proverbs of the Qur'ān)

As Hassan and Lutfi Hossein (2021) explain, Arabic dictionaries note that the word *mathal* (مثل) has multiple meanings, including analogy, equivalence, example, simile, and similitude. Additionally, derivatives from the root letters *م/ث/ل* are used in various contexts. Common derivatives of this root include *mithlu* (مثل), *mithaalun* (مثال), and *mathalun* (مثال).

According to Fayrouzabadi, *mithlun* denotes something similar, analogous, or an equivalent. *Mithaalun* means a model, quality, mode, pattern, or example, while *mathalun* signifies a condition, state, case, or a description by way of comparison (Ibn Mandhour, 1999, p. 49, as cited in Hassan and Lutfi Hossein, 2021). He also notes that the root verb *mathala* (مَثَّلَ) means to resemble, imitate, or compare one thing to another. *Mithl* (مِثْل) means likeness or resemblance, and *mathal* (مِثَال) is a noun meaning parable, likeness, similitude, comparison, or proverb (p. 43).

Saeed (2006, as cited in Khalaf, 2016) highlights *mathal* as a text type in which a literal interpretation is not intended. It encompasses meanings such as likeness, simile, similitude, analogy, or parable. The Qur'ān frequently employs *amthal* (the plural of *mathal*) using vivid images and anecdotes, drawing comparisons with familiar elements like ants, spiders, or flies to convey abstract concepts. This use of parables is referenced in a Qur'ānic verse (14:25), where Allah presents parables for reflection. The aims of these parables include fostering reverence, reminding believers of Allah's knowledge and power, and promoting harmony. Additionally, Qur'ānic parables illustrate the spiritual relationship between individuals and their Lord and serve to affirm the truth of revelation and the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), aiding in convincing unbelievers. The nuanced meanings associated with *mathal* and *amthal* will be further examined in the data analysis to reveal the variety of senses conveyed in Qur'ānic verses.

### *2.3. Issues on human vs. artificial intelligence translation*

Machine translation and translation studies have evolved as separate fields for much of their histories. Early in both disciplines, some researchers attempted to explain translation through formal linguistic frameworks, setting the stage for potential automation, as demonstrated by Catford (1965). However, the 'cultural turn' in TS shifted the field away from linguistic focus and beyond the initial scope of machine translation. In the 1990s, both fields developed a shared interest in empirical data, with a focus on corpora—especially parallel corpora—although their objectives remained distinct. For example, empirical findings from studies on translation practices in academia, such as those by Baker (1988), had limited influence on machine translation development.

Quality is widely recognized as a key criterion for translation assessment, though it is a relative concept that requires contextualization or alignment with purpose, as noted within translation studies. For instance, Mateo (2014, as cited in Siu, 2023), building on Nord (1997), defines quality as the appropriateness of a translated text to meet a communicative purpose. In translation quality assessment, translations are often rated comparatively as 'very good', 'satisfactory', or 'unacceptable', with criteria generally tied to functional or pragmatic relevance (Siu, 2023). In machine translation evaluation, on the other hand, assessment focuses on comparing systems by output quality, often using ordered categories such as 'better than' or 'indistinguishable'. As the field has progressed, metrics have been developed to correlate with human ratings or rankings (Siu, 2023), supported by ongoing research within the machine translation community.

## **3. Methodology**

### *3.1. The Corpora of the Study*

According to Esmaeeli (1986, p. 643), Qur'ānic proverbs are classified into three categories: Saereh (سائره), Wadihah (واضحہ), and Kamineh (کامنہ). Saereh proverbs are those commonly used in everyday conversations and correspondences. Wadihah proverbs, or proverbial similes, are explicitly identified as similes through the use of the letter kaf at the beginning of the proverb. Kamineh or hidden proverbs, on the other hand, are implied rather than explicitly stated as proverbs, requiring deeper interpretation to recognize their proverbial nature. This research focuses on analyzing the hidden proverbs, which, according to Esmaeeli (1986), amount to 21 instances in the Qur'ān. The proverb corpus for this study is drawn from this classification. The rationale for selecting Kamineh proverbs is that they are implicitly presented, making it more challenging to recognize them as proverbs, both for human translators and AI chatbots. Consequently, analyzing the quality of translation for these hidden proverbs offers a more effective means of assessing translation accuracy.

### *3.2. Chat GPT Chatbot (3.5)*

As introduced in the application, the ChatGPT chatbot is based on the GPT-3.5 architecture developed by OpenAI. This version of the chatbot has 175 billion parameters, which are internal variables used by the model to generate responses. Its training involved learning from a wide range of internet texts. The researcher has chosen GPT-3.5 for this study because it possesses the capabilities required for the research and is readily accessible. Other versions of the chatbot are not as easily obtainable. Therefore, due to the availability and suitability of GPT-3.5 for this research, it has been selected for use.

### *3.3. Procedures*

The researcher followed a systematic approach to conduct this study. The hidden proverbs were extracted from the Qur'ān based on the technical list of Qur'ānic proverbs provided by Esmaeeli (1986), who thoroughly analyzed the linguistic and interpretational aspects of these proverbs in his work. Below, each proverb is accompanied by a description of the related issues concerning its interpretation, as outlined by Esmaeeli (1986). Following this, the English translations of each verse, provided by both Qarai and ChatGPT 3.5, are presented. The translation strategies from Beekman and Callow's (1974) model are then applied and analyzed by the researcher. The findings from the analysis are compared with related studies, discussing both the strengths and limitations of each translation. Finally, the conclusions drawn from the study are presented.

### *3.4. The theoretical frameworks*

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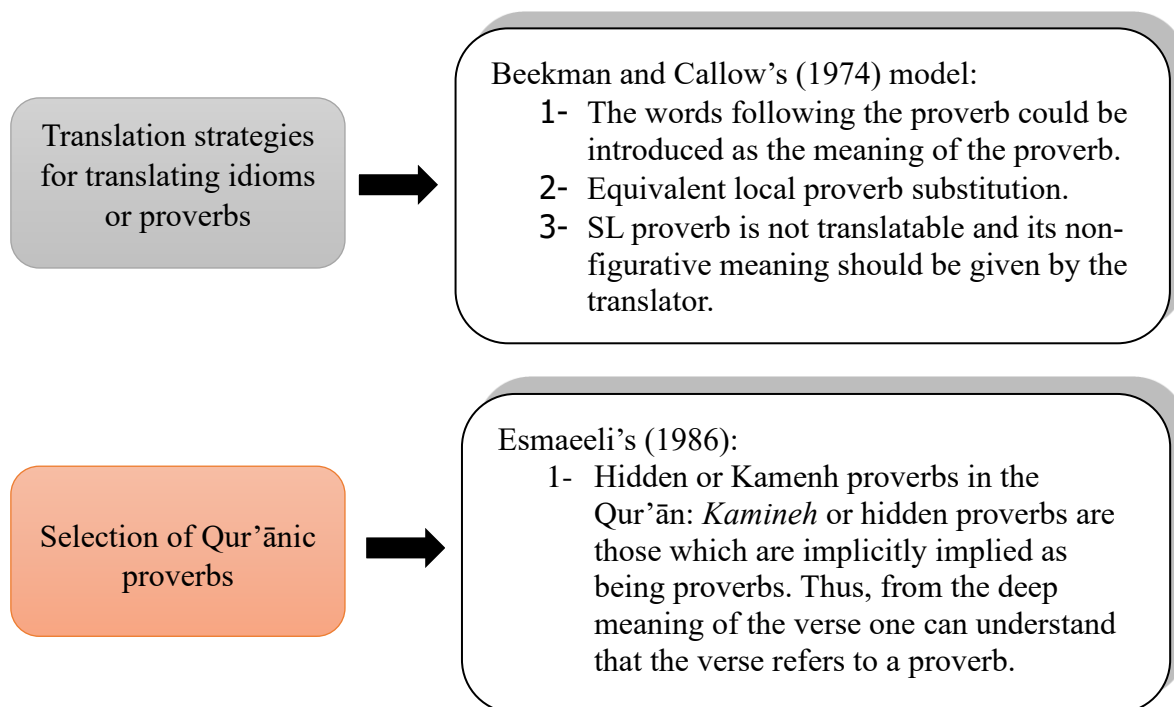


Figure 1. The theoretical framework of the study

### 3.5. Data analysis

A limited number of verses, along with their analyses, are presented here as samples.

*Example #1 (Surah Al-Baqarah: 68):*

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَا فَارِصٌ وَلَا بَكْرٌ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ

**Qarai's translation:** They said, 'Invoke your Lord for us that He may clarify for us what she may be.' He said, 'He says, she is a cow, neither old nor young, of a middle age. Now do what you are commanded.'

**GPT-3.5:** They said, 'Call upon your Lord for us to make clear to us what it is'. [Moses] said, [Allah] says, 'It is a cow which is neither old nor virgin, but median between that', so do what you are commanded'

According to Esmaeeli (1986), the hidden proverb in this verse is “لَا فَارِصٌ وَلَا بَكْرٌ”, which means “neither old nor young, but in between”. This proverb originates from a story involving Bani Israel. During the time of Prophet Moses, a man from Bani Israel named A'mil proposed to a woman, who accepted his proposal. However, his cousin also proposed to her, but she rejected him. Out of jealousy, the rejected cousin killed A'mil. To uncover the murderer, the people asked Prophet Moses to intervene. Allah revealed to Moses that, in order to identify the killer, they needed to slaughter a cow. When they inquired about the specific type of cow, Moses instructed them to find one that was neither too old nor too young. Following this guidance, they slaughtered the cow, took its tail, and touched A'mil's body with it. A'mil momentarily came back to life, identified his killer, and then died again.



Prophet Moses then administered justice, calling for the punishment of the guilty. This story gave rise to the hidden proverb “neither old nor young but in between”, symbolizing moderation. It is often invoked to emphasize balance. Following this guidance, they slaughtered the cow, took its tail, and touched A’mil’s body with it. A’mil momentarily came back to life, identified his killer, and then died again. Prophet Moses then administered justice, calling for the punishment of the guilty. This story gave rise to the hidden proverb “neither old nor young but in between”, symbolizing moderation. It is often invoked to emphasize balance.

This Qur’ānic proverb also inspired other sayings, such as “خير الامور اوسطها”, meaning “the best action is moderation”, Similarly, Amir al-Mu’minin Ali ibn Abi Talib (A.S) said, “الجاهل اما مفرط اما مفرط”, meaning “an ignorant person is either excessive or neglectful”. In Persian poetry, Sa’di also advised moderation with the line: “نه چندان بخور کز دهانت برآید / نه چندان که از / ضعف جانت برآید”, which translates as “Eat moderately so that you neither overeat nor weaken yourself from hunger”. Many similar expressions on the theme of moderation are derived from this verse. In terms of translation, based on Beekman and Callow’s (1974) model, both Qarai and GPT-3.5 provided a literal translation of the proverb without clarifying the underlying message of moderation. A more explicit translation might have included an explanation to highlight this theme, as the proverb is meant to convey the importance of moderation rather than its literal meaning alone.

*Example #2 (Surah Al-Baqarah: 260):*

وَ إِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهٖمُ رَبِّ اَرِنِيْ كَيْفَ تُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى قَالَ اَوْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قَالَ بَلٰى وَّ لٰكِنْ لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِيْ قَالَ فَخُذْ اَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ اِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلٰى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يٰتَيْنِكَ سَعِيًّا وَاَعْلَمَنَّ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيْمٌ

**Qarai’s translation:** And when Abraham said, ‘My Lord! Show me how You revive the dead,’ He said, ‘Do you not believe?’ He said, ‘Yes indeed, but in order that my heart may be at rest.’ He said, ‘Catch four of the birds. Then cut them into pieces, and place a part of them on every mountain, then call them; they will come to you hastening. And know that Allah is all-mighty and all-wise.’ (2:60)

**GPT-3.5:** And [mention] when Abraham said, ‘My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead’. [Allah] said, ‘Have you not believed?’ He said, ‘Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied’. [seeing is believing] [Allah] said, ‘Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them - they will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise’.

This verse is the origin of a proverb about inner satisfaction and certainty. Prophet Ibrahim desired to witness how the dead are brought back to life to satisfy his heart. Thus, he asked Allah for a demonstration of resurrection. Allah instructed him to take four birds, cut them up, mix the pieces, and place portions on different hills. When Ibrahim called them, the birds were miraculously restored to life and flew back to him. The hidden proverb in this verse comes from the phrase “لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي” (“so that my heart may be at ease”), which has inspired several proverbs in Arabic and Persian, such as “شنیدن کی بود مانند دیدن” (“hearing is not the same as seeing”) and “شنیدن چو دیدن نباشد درست” (Asadi), along with the Arabic proverb “الخبر يَحْتَمِلُ الصِّدْقَ وَ الكَذِبَ”, (“a report may be true or false”) (Esmaeeli, 1986). In terms of translation, based on Beekman and Callow’s (1974) model, Qarai’s translation remains

literal, introducing only the basic meaning of the phrase. However, GPT-3.5 offers a cultural equivalent by replacing the proverb with “seeing is believing”, capturing the intended nuance of the original.

*Example #3 (Surah Al-Isra: 7):*

لِئِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُوءُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَ  
لِيُتَبَرَّوْا مَا عَلَوْا تَتَّبِرًا

**Qarai’s translation:** [saying,] ‘If you do good, you will do good to your [own] souls, and if you do evil, it will be [evil] for them.’ So when the occasion for the other [prophecy] comes, they will make your faces wretched, and enter the Temple just as they entered it the first time, and destroy utterly whatever they come upon.

**GPT-3.5:** If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [you do it] to yourselves. Then when the final promise comes, [We will send your enemies] to sadden your faces and to enter the mosque as they entered it the first time, and to destroy what they had taken over with [total] destruction.

According to Kashf al-Asrar (as cited in Esmaeeli, 1986), “If you do good deeds, you have done them for yourself, and if you do bad deeds, you have inflicted harm upon yourself”. The majesty of honor and the fullness of glory belong solely to the Great Lord, who is entirely unaffected by the obedience of the obedient or the sins of the sinners. This verse highlights the impact of human actions, emphasizing that the effects of one’s deeds do not reach God. Instead, if someone acts for God, it benefits themselves, and if someone acts solely for themselves, it does not serve God. Every action ultimately returns to the doer, who alone will experience its results. The wise have often said that people can be divided into different types based on their motivations and goals. Some pursue desires and pleasures, others seek reputation and fame, while some remain ignorant or detached, choosing isolation and companionship in seclusion. The pure and sincere seekers follow the path of love, but those who act purely for God’s sake are few indeed. This verse conveys a similar message to the previous example, though it uses positive wording (“if you do good, you have done good to yourself”) as opposed to the previous phrasing (“if you do wrong to others, you have done wrong to yourself”). In translating this hidden proverb, both Qarai and GPT-3.5 provided a literal translation, following the theoretical framework of Beekman and Callow (1974). Although both translators included some explanatory notes, these additions do not directly pertain to the translation of the hidden proverb itself.

*Example #4 (Surah Yunus: 39):*

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعَلَمِهِ وَ لَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ

**Qarai’s translation:** Indeed, they deny something whose knowledge they do not comprehend, and whose explanation has not yet come to them. Those who were before them denied likewise. So observe how was the fate of the wrongdoers!

**GPT-3.5:** But they denied the knowledge they could not encompass and its interpretation has not yet come to them. Thus did those before them deny. Then observe how was the end of the wrongdoers.

Ali bin Ibrahim (may Allah have mercy on him) stated that the verse “وَرَجِعُوا إِلَى آيَاتِ اللَّهِ” (“and they returned to the signs of Allah”) was revealed in reference to the belief in Raj’a (the return). According to the interpretation of this verse, Ibn Abu Umair reported from some of his companions, and Abu Basir also narrated, that Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: “The return (Raj’a) is neither from this world nor solely the Hereafter; rather, it is the manifestation (al-Zuhur) of the Mahdi (peace be upon him), who is the Qa’im (the Riser). There is no difference between our belief and that of our opponents regarding the appearance of Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him). Our opponents agree with us on the appearance, but our distinction lies in the belief that the return occurs during the appearance of Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him), whereas our opponents believe it pertains solely to the Hereafter and Resurrection. The term ‘return’ specifically denotes this concept, distinguishing it from the term ‘appearance’”. (Esmaeeli, 1986). In 1351 AH, Shaykh Abdul Karim Haeri Yazdi (may Allah’s mercy be upon him) engaged in a discussion with Shaykh Hamza at his home regarding the belief in Raj’a. Shaykh Hamza posed several questions, to which Shaykh Abdul Karim Haeri responded, drawing on evidence from various sects to demonstrate that Raj’a is an essential belief, particularly within Shia Islam. He provided convincing proofs from the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Imams (peace be upon them) concerning Raj’a and related concepts (p.197). In this context, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) also remarked, “People are the enemies of what they do not know”.

In standard Arabic, the word “جهل” (jahl) carries several meanings:

- ✓ Ignorance or lack of knowledge: “جَهْلًا وَّ جَهَالَةً” (He was unaware or ignorant).
- ✓ Foolishness or the act of behaving foolishly.
- ✓ Something ordinary or customary: “شَيْءٌ عَادِيٌّ وَ مَأْلُوفٌ وَ مُعْتَادٌ” (Something normal or familiar).

Typically, a person who lacks knowledge about something often develops hostility or aversion toward it (p. 197). Regarding the English translations produced within a theoretical translation framework, Beekman and Callow’s (1974) model suggests that both Qarai and GPT-3.5 have provided a literal translation without clarifying the implicit proverb. As a result, the underlying meaning of the proverb is only indirectly conveyed.

*Example #4 (Surah Yusuf: 64):*

قَالَ هَلْ آمَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَا أَمَنْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَخِيهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظًا وَ هُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

**Qarai’s translation:** He said, ‘Should I not trust you with him just as I trusted you with his brother before? Yet Allah is the best of protectors, and He is the most merciful of merciful ones.’ (64)

**GPT-3.5:** ‘Shall I entrust you with him except [under coercion] as I entrusted you with his brother before? But Allah is the best guardian, and He is the most merciful of the merciful’.

The hidden proverb in this verse refers to the story of Prophet Joseph and his father Prophet Jacob when he trusted Joseph's brothers and let Joseph go with them to the desert and they tried to kill him and finally put him in a well. Many years later Joseph's brothers needed to take their brother Benjamin to Egypt so that they may be given wheat. This time when they went to their father to ask him let permit Benjamin to accompany the caravan to Egypt, Prophet Jacob said in response, "Shall I entrust you with him (Binyamin)?" A rhetorical question indicating denial. He meant: "I do not entrust you with him, but Allah is the best protector." This was after they said: "If he (Binyamin) is a thief, so indeed a brother of his (Yusuf) has stolen before." Then Yaqub turned away from them while in pain and said: "Alas, my grief for Yusuf!" His eyes turned white from sorrow, for he was indeed a suppressor of grief. He can be called a protector because he knows best who to guard and who not to guard. It is better for people to trust God for protection and preservation from any harm. Therefore, after every effort, I trust Him with my affairs and leave my matters to Him, for He is the Most Merciful of the merciful and the most forgiving of the forgivers. Thus, trust in Him (Esmaeeli, 1986). Other proverbs taken from this Qur'anic hidden proverb are:

"A believer is not stung twice from the same hole".

"To get bitten twice by the same snake from the same hole". This means that a believer is not deceived twice by the same trick. Once, Abu Umar Al-Jahmi betrayed the Prophet (peace be upon him) and broke his promise, causing grief. Then he asked for another chance, which was granted. Again, he broke his promise, causing even more grief. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that a believer is not deceived twice by the same person. Abu Umar's fate was sealed, and he died a miserable death, cursed by God (p. 700).

Farsi Proverbs:

1. Nobody falls into the same hole twice.
2. Once burned by hot milk, next time will blow on cold water.
3. People who learn from their mistakes won't get hurt twice.
4. A person falls into a hole only once.
5. He who is cautious won't fall twice.
6. You can cross a river only once; next time, find a different path.

In analyzing the translations provided for the hidden proverb within the verse "Shall I trust you again with your brother?" it is clear that identifying the underlying proverb can be challenging. According to Beekman and Callow's (1974) model, both Qarai and GPT-3.5 have rendered a literal translation of the phrase without clarifying the implied proverb. Consequently, the meaning of the proverb is merely presented rather than fully explicated.

#### **4. Results**

As shown in Table 1, Ali Qoli Qarai's translation approach, based on the theoretical frameworks examined in this research, does not align with the second type of strategy for translating idioms and proverbs, as defined by Beekman and Callow (1974). According to their model, there are three strategies for translating idioms and proverbs:

1. Adding an explanation following the proverb to clarify its meaning.
2. Replacing the source language proverb with an equivalent proverb in the target language.
3. Providing the non-figurative meaning of the source language proverb when it is untranslatable.

In this case, Qarai's approach diverges from the second strategy and employs methods outside these prescribed types.

Table 1. The list and frequency translation strategies and quality assessment of Qarai's English translation

	Verse: chapter	Translation strategies
1	2:68	Proverb meaning explained in text
2	2:260	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
3	4:100	Proverb meaning explained in text
4	4:123	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
5	17:7	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
6	29:6	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
7	99:7	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
8	4:111	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
9	7:163	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
10	2:216	Proverb meaning explained in text
11	9:47	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
12	10:39	Proverb meaning explained in text
13	12:64	Proverb meaning explained in text
14	17:110	Proverb meaning explained in text
15	19:75	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
16	22:4	Proverb meaning explained in text
17	25:67	Proverb meaning explained in text
18	71:27	Proverb meaning explained in text
19	2:156	Proverb meaning explained in text
20	109:6	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
21	53:39	Proverb meaning explained in text

In Qarai's translation, the researcher analyzed 21 verses, revealing the following distribution of translation strategies:

- **11 instances (52.3%)** used the strategy of appending an explanation to convey the meaning of the proverb.
- **0 instances (0%)** applied the strategy of replacing the source language proverb with a locally equivalent proverb, which is considered the most natural and dynamic translation approach.
- **10 instances (47.6%)** involved translating the source language proverb as non-translatable, providing only its non-figurative meaning.

These findings indicate that Qarai's translation strategies lean toward a more formal approach. This method either emphasizes the proverb's non-translatability or conveys only its figurative meaning without directly rendering the proverb. A limitation of this approach is that, while it signals the existence of a hidden proverb to both reader and translator, it does not fully capture its deeper or nuanced meanings. Figure 2 visually represents the distribution of Qarai's translation strategies for clarity.

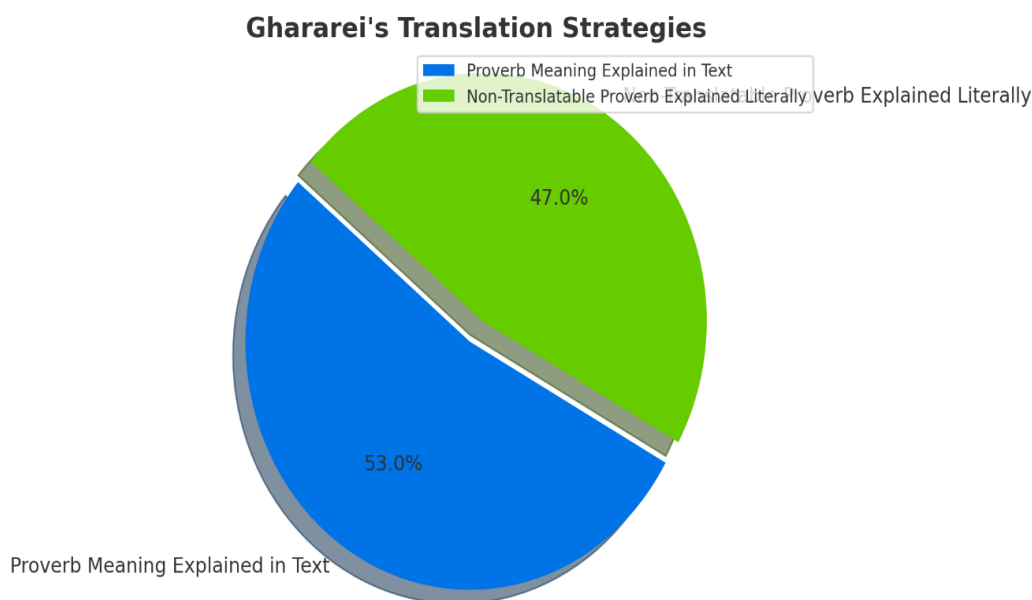


Figure 2. Qarai's translation strategies

Table 2 based on the theoretical frameworks studied in this research, outlines the translation strategies employed by GPT-3.5 in rendering idioms and proverbs, as defined by Beekman and Callow (1974). Their model identifies three primary strategies for translating idioms and proverbs:

1. Introducing the words following the proverb to clarify its meaning.
2. Replacing the source language proverb with an equivalent local proverb.
3. Conveying the non-figurative meaning directly when the source language proverb is untranslatable.

In the analysis of 21 Qur'ānic verses, the researcher identified the following distribution of translation strategies used by GPT-3.5:

- **9 instances (42.8%)** used the strategy of introducing the following words to explain the proverb's meaning.
- **6 instances (28.5%)** replaced the SL proverb with an equivalent local proverb, regarded as the most natural and dynamic strategy.
- **6 instances (28.5%)** conveyed the non-figurative meaning directly, treating the proverb as untranslatable.

Table 2. The list and frequency of translation strategies of GPT-3.5 English translation

	Verse: chapter	Translation strategies
1	2:68	Proverb meaning explained in text
2	2:260	Equivalent local proverb substitution
3	4:100	Equivalent local proverb substitution
4	4:123	Equivalent local proverb substitution
5	17:7	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
6	29:6	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
7	99:7	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
8	4:111	Equivalent local proverb substitution
9	7:163	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
10	2:216	Proverb meaning explained in text
11	9:47	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
12	10:39	Proverb meaning explained in text
13	12:64	Proverb meaning explained in text
14	17:110	Proverb meaning explained in text
15	19:75	Non-translatable proverb explained literally
16	22:4	Equivalent local proverb substitution
17	25:67	Equivalent local proverb substitution
18	71:27	Proverb meaning explained in text
19	2:156	Proverb meaning explained in text
20	109:6	Proverb meaning explained in text
21	53:39	Proverb meaning explained in text

These findings suggest that GPT-3.5, unlike Qarai's more formal approach, demonstrates a capacity for dynamic translation by substituting source language proverbs with equivalent local proverbs in 28.5% of cases. This is significant, as Qarai did not employ this strategy at all when translating implicit proverbs. Additionally, GPT-3.5 displayed an enhanced ability to detect implicit proverbs within the Qur'an, using the "non-translatable" strategy less frequently than Qarai (28.5% for GPT-3.5 versus 0% for Qarai). These differences may be attributed to the complexity of the verses and the prominence of certain proverbs within search engines or training datasets. To illustrate these findings, the pie chart below shows the distribution of translation strategies employed by GPT-3.5.

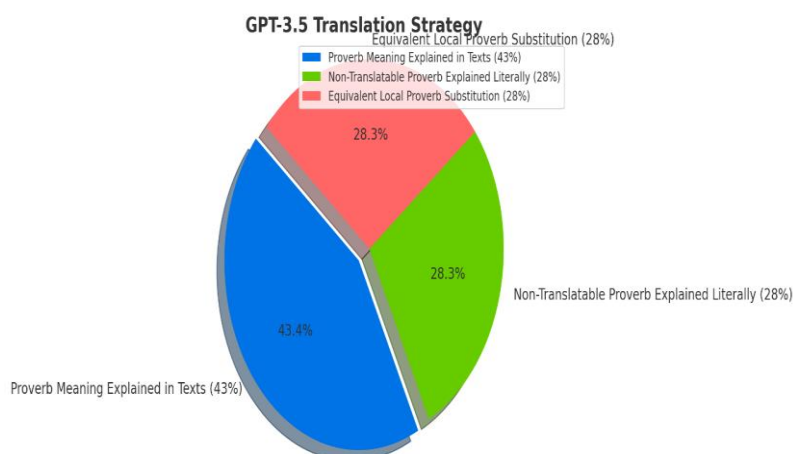


Figure 3. GPT-3.5's translation strategies

## 5. Conclusion

As presented in Table 1, Beekman and Callow's (1974) model for evaluating translation strategies consists of three key parameters. To establish a connection between this model and the dynamism of translation, the most effective strategy is one that resonates with the reader's emotions, making it easier for them to understand and connect with the culture of the source text. Looking at Beekman and Callow's model, it becomes evident that replacing the source language proverb with an equivalent local proverb aligns most closely with dynamic equivalence and localization strategies. Among the other two strategies proposed by Beekman and Callow, which are more aligned with literal translation theories, replacing the SL proverb with an equivalent local proverb proves to be the most effective for translating Qur'ānic hidden proverbs.

In the comparison between Qarai's translation and GPT 3.5, it was found that Qarai used the strategy of rendering the SL proverb's non-figurative meaning 47.6% of the time, while GPT 3.5 employed this strategy only 28.5% of the time. On the other hand, Qarai used the strategy of introducing words following the proverb to explain its meaning 53% of the time, whereas GPT 3.5 used this approach in only 28.5% of cases. The most significant finding, however, was that GPT 3.5 excelled in replacing the SL proverb with an equivalent local proverb, doing so 28.5% of the time, while Qarai did not employ this strategy at all. The study's results confirm that GPT 3.5, a machine translation tool, outperformed Qarai, the human translator, in several aspects. As indicated by the research questions, and based on the analysis of translation strategies and quality, GPT 3.5 demonstrated remarkable progress compared to Qarai in rendering hidden proverbs from the Qur'ān. Among the three translation strategies examined, the strategy of replacing the SL proverb with an equivalent local proverb—which is crucial for translating culture-bound items—was employed much more effectively by GPT 3.5 than by Qarai.

Regarding the comparison between GPT 3.5 and human translation (Qarai) in translating hidden proverbs, it can be concluded that although GPT 3.5 still has a long way to go in fully translating culture-specific items and hidden proverbs, it has made notable strides. The application has shown the ability to partially identify and translate hidden proverbs. However, further development is necessary to enhance its capacity for producing higher-quality translations. In terms of translation strategies, GPT 3.5 has proven more effective than Qarai in using more natural, dynamic strategies for translation. Hidden proverbs in the Qur'ān are among the most challenging and cultural-specific items to identify and translate, making this progress all the more significant. The most important contribution of this research lies in its exploration of new technologies applied to the translation of one of the most sensitive and ideologically significant texts for Muslims. Investigating the potential of new technologies in Qur'ān translation is invaluable for testing their capacity to handle such complex texts.

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