Volume 2, Issue 2 – Serial Number 6
April 2024

TTAIS
International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies

This page is intentionally left blank

About this journal

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.

Publication authorization is certified by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; No. 91383. International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies is a funded publication by Ākhūnd-e Khorāsāni Center for Graduate Studies affiliated with Baqir al-Olum University of Qom.

Target Audience

TTAIS may be helpful for Seminary and university scholars and national and international researchers in the field of Islamic studies translation. TTAIS has been launched for postgraduate and research disciplines which can get the knowledge from the disseminated information of the published articles in TTAIS, which is also so attractive in the global scale.

Core Value

At global invention, TTAIS has the core values as:

- Scientific integrity
- Quality
- Originality
- Clarity
- Innovation
- Knowledge dissemination.

Publishing Schedule

TTAIS is a quarterly publication releasing four seasonal issues each year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn). Exact schedule of publication for each season is as the following:

- January
- April
- July
- October

Governing Body

TTAIS has a very strong editorial board, whose members are recognized experts in the subject areas included within the journal's scope. The full names and affiliations of the journal's editors are provided on the journal's Web site

Open Access Policy

TTAIS provides open access to all content published in it to provide access to research results for the public and thus play an important role in the production and exchange of knowledge around the world. By using the open access policy, authors will be able to display their articles to the public without any restrictions. Therefore, their articles will be more cited and more searchable in indexing databases. TTAIS follows Budapest Open Access Initiative definition of Open Access.

Aims and Scope

Vision

"Playing the role of an academic and theological media to produce and promote the results of theoretical and applied research in order to support knowledge, education and research in the field of textual and translation analysis in Islamic Studies".

Mission

- Paving the ground for strengthening international languages and discourse in Islamic studies;
- Explaining and strengthening the authority of Islamic texts studies in the scientific, social and academic arena;
- Expanding communication, publishing and media capacity of Islamic studies in the global scope.

Aims

- Reinforcement of conceptual foundations in Islamic terms;
- Assessment of translational equivalents for Islamic terms;
- Supporting translators and researchers in the field of Islamic studies;
- Bringing topics in Islamic studies to translators' attention;
- Identification and publication of latest scientific methods for the translation of Islamic texts;
- Construction of a network of translators, Islamic terminologists, and linguists for the development of text analysis in Islamic Studies in the international arena;
- Developing a glossary for Islamic terms;
- Facilitation of methods for the translation of Islamic texts in different languages.

Scope

The scope of TTAIS includes but not limited to the following topics:

- Terminology of Islamic concepts;
- Philology and its application in understanding and translating Islamic texts;
- Analysis of Islamic terms and concepts;

- Translation research in key Islamic texts such as the Holy Qur’ān and Nahj al-Balagha;
- Genealogy and etymology of terms in Islamic discourse;
- Pragmatics of Islamic discourse;
- Knowledge management in Islamic discourse;
- Corpus linguistics as regards the translation of texts in the area of Islamic studies;
- Discourse analysis and Islamic studies;
- Hermeneutics and translation of Islamic texts;
- Evaluation of translational equivalents in Islamic studies;
- Critique of translations of Islamic texts;
- Investigating Interdisciplinary Islamic references and educational texts;
- Discussion of translation procedures and strategies regarding Islamic terms;
- Discussion of stylistics as regards the translation of Islamic texts;
- Problem-solving strategies in producing equivalents in specialized Islamic texts;
- Methodology of translating Islamic texts and terms;
- Translation quality assessment in the area of Islamic studies;
- Investigation into problems in the translation of Islamic discourse;
- Discussion of cultural issues in the translation of Islamic texts.

International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies (TTAIS)

Quarterly Publication

OPEN ACCESS

Editorial Contact Information

Address: Department of Islamic Culture and Communication, Akhund Khorasani Center for Graduate Studies, Islamic Propagation Office-Khorasan Razavi Branch, Ayatollah Khazali Street, Khosravi Crossroad, Mashhad, Iran/ Postal code: 9134683187

Tel: +985132239193

Email: ttais.akhs@bou.ac.ir
ttais.akhs@gmail.com

Website: http://ttais.akhs.bou.ac.ir/

Publication Authorization is certified by Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Iran; No.: 91383, January 31, 2022

Table of Contents

Volume 2, Issue 2 - Serial Number 6, April 2024

International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies

Journal homepage: http://ttais.akhs.bou.ac.ir/

A Historical, Descriptive and Cognitive Semantic Evaluation of the Phrase 'Mīṯāqā Ġalīẓā' in the Holy Qur'ān

Mahbobe Sqab Gandomabadi[1], Elham Yazdanmehr[2*]

1. Department of Theology, Mashhad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran
2. Attar Institute of Higher Education, Mashhad, Iran

* Corresponding author: yazdanmehr@attar.ac.ir

https://doi.org/10.22081/ttais.2025.70394.1045

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: 25 November 2023
Revised: 21 December 2023
Accepted: 4 February 2024

Keywords:
Authenticity Principle,
Cognitive Semantics,
Descriptive Semantics,
Historical Semantics,
Mīṯāqā Ġalīẓā,
Qur'ānic Expression.

ABSTRACT

The semantic analysis of Qur'ānic vocabulary has emerged as a significant area of study in recent years. In the Holy Qur'ān, God specifically uses the phrase *mīṯāqā ġalīẓā* (a firm covenant) to describe the marriage agreement, warranting a semantic investigation to understand the reasoning behind this choice. This study adopts a qualitative approach to explore why this phrase was selected for the marriage covenant. It employs historical, descriptive, and cognitive analyses of the phrase. The term *mīṯāqā ġalīẓā* appears three times in the Qur'ān: first, in reference to God's covenant with the prophets (Al-Ahzab: 7); second, regarding God's covenant with the people of Israel (An-Nisaa': 154); and third, in the context of marriage (An-Nisaa': 21). Through historical semantics, the study traces the semantic evolution of *mīṯāq*. Using descriptive semantics, it analyzes the phrase contextually and examines its paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions to uncover its semantic features and components. Furthermore, by applying the principle of authenticity of Qur'ānic terms within cognitive semantics, the study concludes that no synonym or alternative phrase adequately conveys the profound semantic depth and layers of *mīṯāqā* in the given contexts.

How to cite this article: Gandomabadi, M. S. and Yazdanmehr, E. (2024). A Historical, Descriptive and Cognitive Semantic Evaluation of the Phrase 'Mīṯāqā Ġalīẓā' in the Holy Qur'ān. *International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies*, *2*(2), 119-137. doi: 10.22081/ttais.2025.70394.1045

1. Introduction

At its core, semantics is the scientific study of meaning (Safavi, 2008) and is categorized into philosophical, logical, and linguistic branches (Qaeminia, 2010). The cognitive semantics of the Qur'ān seeks to construct a cognitive map of the Holy Book (Qaeminia, 2011). This map helps interpreters understand how the Qur'ān conceptualizes and describes various situations and concepts, as well as whether underlying principles govern these conceptualizations. If such principles exist, how should they be applied to the interpretation of its verses? Developing this cognitive map is crucial for advancing beyond conventional interpretations of the Qur'ān, as it engages with a specialized knowledge system not accessible from external sources. A thorough and careful examination of the Qur'ān's interpretations and concepts is essential to unlocking the profound insights it offers to humanity. Moreover, employing modern methodologies and sources of knowledge not only facilitates a systematic reflection on Qur'ānic verses but also serves as a valuable example of scholarly inquiry. This approach enables interpreters to uncover the deeper meanings of Qur'ānic conceptualizations and analyze them in their original form, free from reductionism. Since the Qur'ān is regarded as a divine miracle, its interpretations also derive from divine wisdom and serve a distinct purpose. Therefore, Qur'ānic interpretations should be examined as they are, respecting their intrinsic depth and significance (Qaeminia, 2011).

Beyond cognitive semantic analysis, historical semantics not only enhances our awareness of the alterity of past documents but also fosters a humbler approach to interpreting historical evidence in the Holy Qur'ān. This alternative method of engagement becomes especially crucial when studying religious texts and contexts that serve as moral and spiritual guides for human life (Geelhar et al., 2023). Similarly, descriptive semantics aids in examining the distribution of synonyms for specific words or phrases in religious texts, including the Holy Qur'ān, particularly in their concentrated presence within certain spheres of thought. Such patterns reflect the significance attributed to these spheres by God (Ullmann, 1953).

A comprehensive examination of the meanings of Qur'ānic verses is essential for Qur'ānic research. This goal can only be achieved if the precise meanings of Qur'ānic words are understood and the choice of specific words over others is justified. Religious scholars emphasize that recognizing the correct and exact meanings of Qur'ānic terms is key to grasping God's intended message. Given the originality of the Holy Qur'ān's verses, this issue manifests in various forms, including interpretation and translation. The infallible Shiite Imams, regarded as the true interpreters of the Holy Qur'ān, have highlighted this challenge. In their absence, it becomes the responsibility of their devoted followers to scrutinize the sacred text to uncover the significance of its words and phrases. One method that has been employed for nearly a century is semantic analysis, which studies meaning to deepen textual understanding (Izutsu, 2003). Semantics explores the relationships between words and meanings, demonstrating how key terms in the Holy Qur'ān illuminate particular semantic layers of other words. While researchers have increasingly focused on the semantic analysis of Qur'ānic content in recent years, many words and phrases remain unexplored. One such phrase is mīṯ̲āqā g̲halīẓā, which literally means 'a firm covenant'. However, its deeper connotative meanings have yet to be fully examined. To bridge this gap in the literature, the present study focuses on the semantic analysis of this phrase.

The significance of this study lies, first and foremost, in its semantic analysis. Semantics serves as a bridge for exploring meaning and understanding texts; in the case of the Holy

Qur'ān, it helps unravel the intentions and implications of divine revelations. This approach examines the relationships between words and meanings, demonstrating how the selection of specific words or phrases in the Holy Qur'ān reveals deeper semantic layers of content words. Secondly, in light of growing skepticism regarding women's rights in Islam—particularly in the context of marriage—spread through the Internet and mass media, numerous electronic and printed sources have raised doubts about this issue. This study addresses such concerns by analyzing the roots of the phrase mīṯ̲āqā gẖ̲alīẓā, illustrating its connection to the Islamic marriage agreement and the profound value that God has bestowed upon women within this sacred covenant.

This paper aims to examine the semantic evolution of the word mīthāq (i.e., covenant) through the lens of historical semantics. It then employs descriptive semantics, contextual analysis, and the extraction of paradigmatic and syntagmatic concepts to analyze its semantic features along both axes. Additionally, it explores the meaning and components of mīthāq in the Holy Qur'ān. Following the semantic principle of the originality of Qur'ānic expressions, this study investigates the various layers of the phrase mīthāqan ghalīẓan (i.e., firm covenant). An initial review reveals that this phrase appears three times in the Holy Qur'ān, with one instance referring to the marriage covenant—an aspect that has received comparatively less attention. To gain a precise understanding of the significance of mīthāqan ghalīẓan in the Holy Qur'ān, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

- Why did God describe the act of marriage in the Holy Qur'ān with the particular phrase *mīṯ̲āqā gẖ̲alīẓā*?

- What are the historical, descriptive and cognitive semantic features of the phrase *mīṯ̲āqā gẖ̲alīẓā* in the Holy Qur'ān?

2. Review of the literature

2.1. Semantic analysis of Qur'ānic phrases

Among contemporary linguists, Toshihiko Izutsu (2002), a Japanese scholar, has employed semantic analysis in two of his works: *God and Man in the Qur'ān* and *Ethical-Religious Concepts in the Holy Qur'ān*. In Iran, a few books have been published on the semantics of religious texts, particularly the Holy Qur'ān, including *Semantic Changes in the Qur'ān* by Seyed Hossein Seyedi (2015), *An Introduction to Semantics* by Kourosh Safavi (2004), and *An Introduction to Semantics* by Balqis Roshan (2009). Regarding the phrase *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* in the context of marriage, one notable study is Ismail Malakootikhah's (2011) paper on its semantics and the fundamental components of loyalty. Another relevant work is Abolfazl Khoshmanesh's (2013) paper, *Marriage as a Great Covenant: A Comparative Semantics of the Firm Covenant in the Holy Qur'ān*. Despite the profound significance of the Holy Qur'ān and the necessity of in-depth lexical and semantic studies, there remains a limited number of relevant semantic analyses. In particular, historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic analyses of the principle of originality in Qur'ānic expressions are lacking, further highlighting the need for this study. As mentioned earlier, only one paper has been published specifically on the analysis of *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* in Qur'ānic verses. However, this phrase can be examined more comprehensively through historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic lenses to develop a deeper understanding of its underlying meaning and interpretation. Semantic analysis can effectively clarify different interpretations of a given phrase, uncover linguistic nuances in Qur'ānic discourse, and expand the scope of interpretation (Izutsu, 2002, 2003). Given the scarcity of semantic

studies on *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* in the Holy Qur'ān—and considering its potential implications for reinforcing family bonds and elevating the value of women's roles in marriage from an Islamic perspective—this study seeks to conduct a semantic analysis of this phrase in the sacred text.

2.2. Authenticity of Qur'ānic interpretations

Discussions of the authenticity of Qur'ān have prevailed ever since the Holy Book was revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam. Internal and external sources of evidence have been found to prove the originality of the content of the Holy Qur'ān (Waqdan, 2014). The underlying assumption of the present researh or any similar study that semantically analyzes words and expressions in the Holy Book is the acceptance of the authenticity of Qur'ān, which contends its teachings are genuinely original and have not been adopted or plagiarized. The relevance of the alleged authenticity of the Holy Qur'ān to semantic analysis is the non-synonymy issue, the belief that the words, phrases and expressions in the Holy Book have been each selected by God for a good reason and are not replaceable (Yousof, 2006, Al-Askari, 1974, Hafani, 1970). Thus, the meticulous choice of every word or word combination in the Holy Book can be analyzed semantically to unravel the specific historical, descriptive and cognitive features which make it unique to be used in the particular context.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing a descriptive-analytic design to explore the foundations of semantic knowledge. Its primary aim was to extract the lexical meaning and semantic scope of the phrase *mīṯ̲āqā gẖalīẓā* as it appears in the Holy Qur'ān. The data collection and analysis drew exclusively from all relevant Qur'ānic verses. The research process, which involved simultaneous data collection and analysis, followed five key steps:

1. To unravel the semantic components and layers of *mīṯ̲āqā gẖalīẓā*, the first step involved examining the lexical meaning of *mīṯ̲āq* through historical semantics.

2. The second step focused on identifying the frequency of *mīṯ̲āq* in the Qur'ān and counting the occurrences of verses containing *mīṯ̲āqā gẖalīẓā* within their verbal contexts.

3. The third step involved identifying alternative words that could be used in place of *mīṯ̲āq*.

4. The fourth step examined the co-occurrences of *mīṯ̲āq* within the text.

5. The final step applied descriptive semantics to uncover the features and semantic components of *mīṯ̲āqā gẖalīẓā*, while utilizing the semantic principle of the "authenticity of Qur'ānic expressions" to reveal the multiple semantic layers of the phrase.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is rooted in lexical semantics, which focuses on the meaning of words and word combinations. Lexical semantics examines both the internal semantic structure of words and the semantic relationships within a given vocabulary (Cooper & Retoré, 2017).

4. Results

The results of the semantic analysis of *mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā* are presented here in several sections as elaborated below.

4.1. Historical semantic analysis of mīt̲hāq

The word mīt̲hāq held a basic and central meaning prior to the revelation of the Qur'ān. After the emergence of the Holy Book, its semantic field expanded, and it began to be used alongside other terms, which partially altered its original meaning. Nevertheless, by reflecting on the various uses of this word, its fundamental and central meaning can still be discerned.

The word *mīt̲hāq* was used by pre-Islamic Arabs to refer to a rope in general, or specifically to a rope used to tightly bind prisoners of war and animals (Zubaydi, 1993). Thus, the concept of tightening a rope is integral to the original meaning of *mīt̲hāq*. In fact, considering its root *wat̲hãqa*[1], it can be argued that the act of binding with a rope represented the most tangible, earthly concept associated with this word during the pre-Islamic era. In the non-divine worldview of the *Jāhiliyyah* (Age of Ignorance)—a worldview driven by lust, anger, and an obsession with women, horses, and swords—this was the primary understanding of the term. When *tawaṭ̲haqw*[2], derived from the same root, was used to describe the strengthening of treaties, it reflected the nature of agreements among pre-Islamic Arabs, which were largely rooted in blood kinship. The practice of this virtue was typically confined to the boundaries of the tribe or clan. Within this limited context, such loyalty held significant importance, manifesting as selfless sacrifice and devotion to relatives, unwavering sincerity toward friends, and absolute trustworthiness and commitment to covenants and pacts (Izutsu, 2002). In *Asās al-Balāghah* (Zamakhshari, 1986), Ka'b ibn Zuhair states: "They will follow what they were opposed to, and they will be more secure than me, and Allah is all-seeing and all-hearing[3]".

However, when this concept and its associated meanings were incorporated into a divine worldview—one in which the purpose of words and phrases was to guide humanity toward spiritual perfection—the semantic scope of the word expanded. It evolved to encompass higher levels of transcendence and began to represent more elevated, spiritual examples.

The word *mīt̲hāq* (i.e., covenant) appears 23 times in the Holy Qur'ān. Of these, 20 instances refer to covenants between God and the prophets, between God and the general public, or between people—such as agreements made between governments and nations. Three of these covenants are accompanied by detailed descriptions: two refer to God's covenant with the prophets and the sons of Israel, while one pertains to a marriage contract. With the revelation of the Qur'ān, words took on new life. The most significant reason for this linguistic transformation was the divine and monotheistic worldview presented in the Holy Book. This perspective elevated the meanings of words, allowing them to transcend their original connotations as the Qur'ān's understanding of the world and humanity unfolded. In this new context, words found new associations and relationships. Synonyms,

[1] وَثَقَ

[2] تَواثَقوا

[3] ليوفوا بما كانوا عليه تواثقوا بخيف منّي والله راء و سامع

parallels, and contrasts used throughout the Qur'ān introduced fresh layers of meaning, offering new insights to its audience.

According to Izutsu (2002), vocabulary, as the summative addition of all semantic fields, appears as a complex and vast network of multifaceted links among words, corresponding to an organized whole made up of concepts that are interrelated and dependent on each other in a multiple way. The word *mītẖāq* is derived from the stem *watẖãqa* meaning a rope in general or a rope used to tie animals. This term has a basic meaning as well as a relative meaning. The basic meaning is the primary concept that is within and in its essence, and wherever this word is transmitted, that meaning is also transmitted along with it. However, the relative meaning of the word *mītẖāq* is the one that has arisen through its placement in sentences and among other words and its various relationships with other words. An examination of this word in the Holy Qur'ān shows that the words related positively or negatively to this word are Allah, ạakẖadẖa[4], nabỹyn[5], mītẖāqā, gẖalyẓ[6], Holy Prophet, arch prophets, prophets, children of Israel, lạta'ad̃w[7], ạ̃akẖadẖna[8], rijālun̄[9], nisāʾun[10] and so on. For example, we can say that the use of the word *mītẖāq* next to the word Allah in many cases shows that this word refers to a kind of covenant with God. Before the revelation of Qur'ān, the words derived from *watẖãqa* with the aforementioned meaning had no association with the covenant with God. Therefore, the first extension of the meaning considered for the root of this word is that there is a kind of covenant with God concerning the meaning of this word.

The denotative meaning of the word *mītẖāqā* is a covenant or agreement that is accompanied by an oath (Raghib Isfahani, 1995). This word, whose original form is *mwtẖạq*[11], is derived from the root *ywtẖaq*[12]. Lexicographers have mentioned two related meanings for this, one trust and confidence and the other firmness and stability which lie at the core of *Watẖãqa* (Ibn Manzoor, 1983). It seems there is a compatibility between the two concepts because what is strong and stable is also expected to be trustworthy and reliable, and it is used for contracts and agreements that are confirmed and strengthened by certain things such as oaths and covenants (Raghib Isfahani, 1995). Its general meaning, taking into account both literal meanings of *Watẖãqa* mentioned above, is any matter that brings about confidence and peace along with certainty and stability (Mostafavi, 1981).

The word *gẖalīẓ* is a similar adjective meaning intense, and its root *gẖilẓat*[13] means intensity. It is used in cases such as harshness in speech and behavior, cruelty and stone-heartedness, hardness of the earth, strength of plants and trees, and emphasis of an oath and covenant (Farahidi, 1989; Ibn Manzoor, 1993). In all these cases, there is a kind of density and intensity involved; therefore, the word *gẖilẓat*, which is a similar adjective and its form indicates stability and permanence, is used to describe the concept of intensity and lasting hardness of the covenant.

---

[4] اخذ
[5] نبیّین
[6] غَلیظ
[7] لاتعدّوا
[8] اَخَذنَ
[9] رجال
[10] نساء
[11] موثاق
[12] یوثّق
[13] غِلظَت

The Holy Qur'ān, which was revealed to the Holy Prophet in clear Arabic language, created transcendent moral thoughts from some of the common and customary moral words of the Arab population that were not incompatible with divine revelation (Izutsu, 2002). Therefore, some Arabic words have found a new meaning in the Qur'ān, different from their conventional meaning at the time of revelation, and have ever lived on. In this regard, the word *mīṯ̲āq* which is an Arabic word, developed and extended its meaning during the time of revelation of Qur'ān, and the Holy Book became a collection of covenants and agreements that God made with Adam, the sons of Adam, the prophets, and the nations. It can be concluded that after the revelation of Qur'ān, all moral values deal with the idea of a covenant between man and God.

4.2. Descriptive semantic analysis of mīṯ̲āqā

As for the frequency of occurrence of *mīṯ̲āq* and *mīṯ̲āqā g̲halīẓā*, the analysis showed that the former is used 23 times in 21 verses in the Holy Qur'ān (Al-Baqarah:27, Al-Baqarah:63, Al-Baqarah:83, Al-Baqarah:84, Al-Baqarah:93, Al-Imran:81, Al-Imran:187, Al-Ma'idah:7, Al-Ma'idah:12, Al-Ma'idah:13, Al-Ma'idah:14, Al-Ma'idah:70, Al-Nisaa':21, Al- Nisaa':90, Al- Nisaa':92, Al- Nisaa':154, Al- Nisaa':155, Al-A'raf:169, Al-Anfal:72, Al-Ahzab:7, Al-Hadid:8). Three of these are accompanied by a detailed description. One case is concerned about God's covenant with arch prophets. Another one is about God's covenant with the sons of Israel. And the third one is used to refer to a marriage contract in which women take a covenant from their husbands. These verses are, respectively:

1. "And [remember] when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary, that was a firm covenant."[14] (Al-Ahzab: 7)

2. "And We raised the Mount above them as a covenant, and We told them to enter the gate prostrating, and not to transgress on the Sabbath. They made a solemn covenant." (An-Nisaa': 154)

3. "And how can you pledge it when some of you have already pledged it from one another and they have pledged from you a firm covenant?" (An- Nisaa': 21)

To further examine the phrase *mīṯ̲āqā g̲halīẓā* and its semantic analysis in the Qur'ān and discover its semantic features and components, we should examine the keywords that have a semantic relationship with this phrase in terms of paradigmatic and syntagmatic features.

4.2.1. Paradigmatic concepts of mīṯ̲āqā g̲halīẓā

Here, we deal with the words that have a paradigmatic relationship with the word *mīṯ̲āq*. The first one is the word *Ahd* meaning to maintain and observe something continuously, to preserve, and to make a covenant (Amid, 2010). According to the Qur'ānic Dictionary, it seems that the meaning of "covenant of Allah" is the natural guidance deposited in the existence of every individual, and the meaning of the covenant is its consolidation by the prophets and guardians. That is, the transgressors are those who break their natural guidance and innate understanding after it has been consolidated by the prophets. Therefore,

[14] وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنكَ وَمِن نُّوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

yaqṭaʿūna wa yufsidūna[15] points to the breach of the covenant. According to the verse "The nature of Allah which He has created mankind upon[16]" (Ar-Rum: 30), all people enjoy divine guidance, and the prophets came to establish and strengthen that nature (Qurashi, 1992), but some violate it.

In the Holy Qur'ān, the word *Ahd* is used 46 times in 17 chapters and 36 verses, meaning to preserve and protect something and to observe what needs to be observed, such as "Fulfill the covenant, for the covenant is a matter of obligation[17]" (Isra': 34), meaning to be faithful in keeping your oath, or "My covenant will not be fulfilled by the wrongdoers[18]" (Al-Baqarah: 124). God's covenant[19] can have three meanings:

1- It is the awareness of something that God has settled in our minds in a constructive way.

2- It is the awareness of something that He has commanded us to do in the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah of His Prophet.

3- Sometimes, it refers to what we are committed to, but in the principles of Sharia, it is not obligatory, such as making a vow and anything that is considered a vow, such as "And of them are those who have made a covenant with Allah, if He gives us of His bounty, we will be truthful and we will be among the righteous.[20]" (At-Tawbah: 75).

An examination of the term *mīṯāq* reveals that it is distinct from *Ahd*, which means "covenant". While *Ahd* refers to a covenant in general, *mīṯāq* specifically denotes the reinforcement of a covenant or agreement, often accompanied by an oath (Raghib Isfahani, 1995). This distinction highlights that, despite their similarities, treating these two terms as semantically identical leads to a misrepresentation of their meanings. Another concept associated with *mīṯāq* is loyalty. Among Arabs, loyalty has long been regarded as a noble virtue, reflected in acts of sacrifice and selflessness toward family and kin in the fulfillment of promises or covenants. This value is echoed in verse 43 of *Mu'allaqa* by Zuhair ibn Abi Salmi: "He who fulfills his promise will not be blamed, and he whose heart guides him to the purity of truth and trustworthiness will not be divided" (Izutsu, 2002).

During the pre-Islamic era, known as the Age of Ignorance (Jāhiliyyah), the Arabs valued loyalty above all else. When a promise was made, both the individual and their tribe were bound to uphold it, regardless of circumstances—even in times of war. Oaths, once taken, were considered inviolable. In stark contrast, betrayal and treachery were deeply despised and carried severe social consequences. While loyalty was revered and respected, any act of deceit or dishonor was met with public condemnation. For instance, if someone broke a promise, a banner or flag would be raised in the market of ʿUkāẓ to publicly shame the individual, ensuring that everyone was aware of their dishonor. Covenants, pacts, and oaths held significant importance during this period, serving as essential mechanisms to protect both public and private interests. These agreements were often established for military alliances, economic cooperation, the creation of laws, the protection of public rights, the

---

[15] يَقْطَعُونَ وَ يُفْسِدُونَ
[16] فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا
[17] أَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْؤُلًا
[18] لا يَنالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ
[19] عهد الله
[20] وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ عَاهَدَ اللهَ لَئِنْ آتَانَا مِن فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

repelling of oppression, and the defense of the oppressed. Many of the treaties and oaths made by the Quraysh tribe with other tribes were rooted in such purposes. The process of making agreements in the Jāhiliyyah era often involved symbolic rituals. Agreements were sealed using elements like blood, fire, ashes, salt, or water, or in the presence of idols. Participants might dip their hands in substances such as blood or ash, circumambulate idols, or invoke these elements as witnesses to the covenant. Breaking such covenants was believed to bring misfortune, such as being deprived of the benefits symbolized by these elements—for instance, fire symbolizing warmth and protection. In some cases, people swore by bread and salt, and sharing these with someone created an unbreakable bond of loyalty. Anyone who had partaken in another's bread and salt was obligated to defend them and uphold their rights, never to harm them or their tribe. To formalize and reinforce these agreements, they were often documented in writing. The leaders of both parties would serve as witnesses, and to further solidify the pact, the written agreement was sometimes hung inside the Kaaba. Such documents were regarded with the utmost reverence, and their contents were considered binding. To enhance the sanctity of the covenant, the names of idols and statements with religious or sacred significance were frequently invoked (Kahala, 2014).

Loyalty is defined as fulfilling a promise or commitment without any shortcomings (Qurashi, 1992). In contrast, treachery, cunning, and deceit represent the breaking of promises and agreements (Raghib Isfahani, 1995). Thus, a loyal person is someone who remains steadfast and does not betray the trust of friendship.

A reflection on Qur'ānic verses reveals that the conceptual relationship between loyalty and mīṯ̲āq is neither one of equivalence nor of absolute generality and particularity. Loyalty refers to the act of fulfilling a promise or obligation with complete faithfulness, while mīṯ̲āq denotes a covenant or agreement that is formalized with an oath. In terms of logical sequence, the mīṯ̲āq—the covenant—is established first, and loyalty is demonstrated through the faithful fulfillment of that covenant. Therefore, while there is a degree of semantic overlap between these two terms, and they may occasionally appear interchangeable, they retain distinct meanings and functions.

The third term related to *mīṯ̲āq* is *ʿaqada*, which, as described by Raghib Isfahani (1995), literally means "to tie" or "to bind," typically referring to hard or rigid objects, such as tying a rope or securing the elements of a structure. Metaphorically, it extends to signify various forms of covenants and agreements, including sales contracts and other binding commitments (Raghib Isfahani, 1995; Qurashi, 1992). A Qur'ānic example illustrates this usage: *"And do not intend to conclude a marriage contract until the prescribed period has passed"* (Al-Baqarah: 235). The term *ʿalāqahu* (referring to the binding nature of marriage) is used because marriage involves the formation of a bond, a symbolic "tying" between husband and wife. Lexicographers define *ʿalāqahu* as a noun denoting the establishment of a marital bond, contract, or similar agreement (Qurashi, 1992).

A reflection on Qur'ānic verses shows that *ʿaqada* generally refers to contracts related to transactions, such as purchase, sale, and other forms of property exchange. In contrast, *mīṯ̲āq* denotes a covenant or agreement that carries a deeper, more profound function, often associated with life's fundamental relationships and spiritual connections with God. For instance, in the context of marriage, *mīṯ̲āq* represents not just a legal contract but a sacred bond, a connection of soul to soul between a man and a woman. Thus, while there is a degree of semantic overlap between *ʿaqada* and *mīṯ̲āq*, they possess distinct inherent differences—

ʿ*aqada* emphasizing legal and transactional aspects, and *mīt̲hāq* highlighting spiritual and moral dimensions.

4.2.2. Irreplaceability of the phrase mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā in the Holy Qur'ān

A number of scholars reflecting on the Qur'ānic language argue that the choice of words and expressions in the Holy Book is meticulously deliberate, with each word and phrase being unique and irreplaceable. While it may seem conceivable to find words that appear semantically similar, a deeper exploration of their meanings and implications reveals that these words have no true synonyms. They are distinct in their ability to convey the subtle and precise intentions of the Qur'ān. In contemporary linguistics, semanticists reject the notion of absolute synonymy among words (Safavi, 2000), asserting that every word and phrase carries its own unique nuance. Any minor alteration in a word's placement or structure—even if the words seem synonymous—can lead to significant changes in meaning. To address this, semanticists have introduced the concept of a "radial network of meaning", which helps explain how the Qur'anic language functions in a remarkable way. According to this approach, words that seem synonymous are actually part of a network stemming from a central meaning, with each word contributing a different layer or facet to the overall interpretation.

Considering the points discussed above and analyzing words semantically related to mīt̲hāq or closely associated with it, we conclude that, although these words may seem to carry the same meaning as mīt̲hāq, none of them encompass the same depth, layers, and semantic weight. Furthermore, in the Qur'ānic verses where the phrase mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā (a firm covenant) appears, the term mīt̲hāq is paired with the adjective g̲halīẓā, which intensifies and reinforces the strength and solemnity of the covenant.

4.2.3. Syntagmatic analysis of the phrase mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā in the Holy Qur'ān

From a general perspective, the occurrences of the phrase mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā in the three verses containing it can be categorized into three types: first, verses that refer to the covenant-maker; second, verses that refer to the second party involved in the covenant; and third, verses that address the subject matter of the covenant, as discussed here. In the first two verses, the covenant-maker is God, while in the third verse, the covenant-maker is the women.

1- "And We took from the prophets their covenants, and from you, and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary, and we took from them all a firm covenant".[21] (Ahzab:7)

2- "And We raised above them the status of their covenant, and We told them to enter the door, prostrating, and We said to them not to fight on the Sabbath. We took a firm covenant from them".[22] (Al-Nisaa':154)

3- "And how do you take it, and I have given it to each of you, and I have taken from you a firm covenant".[23] (Al-Nisaa': 21)

---

[21] وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنكَ وَمِن نُّوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

[22] وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمُ ادْخُلُواْ الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لاَ تَعْدُواْ فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

[23] وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ مِنكُمْ مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

The second party (addressee) of the covenant party in verses containing the phrase *mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā*, in two verses, is the arch prophets and the sons to Israel. In one verse left, the second party is the men taking a covenant from their wives while marrying:

1- "And when We took a covenant from the prophets and from you and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, the son of Mary, and We took from them a solemn covenant"[24]. (Al-Ahzab:7)

2- "And We raised above them a mountain with their covenant and told them to enter the gate bowing down. And We said to them not to transgress on the Sabbath. And We took from them a solemn covenant".[25] (An-Nisaa':154)

3- "And how can you take it while you have gone to one another and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?"[26] (An-Nisaa': 21)

4.3. Interpretation of mīt̲hāqā in verses containing the phrase mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā

In the verse "And when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus the son of Mary, and We took from them a solemn covenant" (Ahzab:7), God addresses the Holy Prophet, reminding him of the covenant He took from all the prophets, including the Prophet Muhammad. God emphasizes that He took a firm covenant from them all to ensure they would fulfill their responsibility of preaching and carrying out their mission. The verse first mentions all the prophets in the context of the covenant, followed by the five major prophets, starting with the Prophet Muhammad due to his honor and stature. This solemn covenant represents the responsibility of preaching, guiding, and leading people in all aspects of life. Furthermore, all the prophets were expected to support and confirm one another. The earlier prophets prepared their nations to accept the later prophets, just as the later prophets were expected to uphold and affirm the messages of those who came before them.

In the verse "And We raised above them a mountain with their covenant and told them to enter the gate bowing down. And We said to them not to transgress on the Sabbath. And We took from them a solemn covenant" (An-Nisaa':154), God recounts when the sons of Israel failed to awaken from their heedlessness and discard their arrogance. As a result, He raised the mountain above them and simultaneously took a firm covenant from them. He instructed them to enter the gate of the Holy House in a humble manner, as a form of repentance for their sins. God also emphasized that they must refrain from working and engaging in business on the Sabbath and avoid any acts of transgression or aggression. In return for all of this, God took a solemn covenant from them. However, they failed to fulfill any of these commitments.

The focus of this verse is the covenant that God made with the sons of Israel, yet they chose the path of disbelief, denial, and disobedience, ultimately going astray. As God said: "So because of their breaking of their covenant, disbelief in the signs of God, and their killing of the prophets in cold blood while saying, 'Our hearts are veiled,' God sealed their hearts with disbelief, so they will not believe except for a few" (An-Nisaa': 155). Their hearts were entirely sealed, leaving no way for truth to penetrate. The root cause of their

---

[24] وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنكَ وَمِن نُّوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

[25] وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمُ ادْخُلُواْ الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لاَ تَعْدُواْ فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

[26] وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ مِنكُمْ مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

disbelief lay within themselves, and as a result, only a few who distanced themselves from such arrogance would believe.

In the verse “And how can you take it while you have gone to one another and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?” (An-Nisaa’: 21), God appeals to human emotions, asking how men could fight with their wives and deprive them of their rights, such as their dowry, when they had once shared intimate moments together, as if they were one soul in two bodies. He then reminds them, “Besides, your wives took a firm covenant from you at the time of marriage. How can you disregard this sacred and binding covenant and commit such a blatant breach of it?”

4.4. Semantic features of the phrase mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā

Having explored the paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects of the word mīt̲hāq and the phrase mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā, we can now elaborate on the basic semantic features and components of this term. First, in the Holy Qur'an, mīt̲hāqā g̲halīẓā is generally used to describe a firm covenant or agreement in three instances: with the arch prophets, with the sons of Israel, and with men at the time of marriage. The pronouns referring to God, either directly or indirectly, in the verses containing this phrase indicate that all covenants ultimately come from God.Second, the combination of the adjective g̲halīẓā with the word mīt̲hāq emphasizes the strength and firmness of the covenant in these three cases. One such case refers to the covenant made with the arch prophets, who are the leaders of humanity. This covenant, both externally and internally, is tied to the very origin of creation. Another case involves the sons of Israel, who are described as stubborn and rebellious, yet this deeper message applies to all humanity, emphasizing the need to follow the commands of the prophets, which are, in essence, the commands of God, leading to happiness and perfection in both this world and the Hereafter.Among these instances, there is one unique case in a single verse, where this firm and lasting covenant pertains to the marriage contract, made between men and women as commanded by God. The marriage contract differs significantly from other covenants, as it involves an exchange of souls rather than property, holding a sanctity that is absent in other contracts that involve material exchange (Javadi Amoli, 2018).

The word *mīt̲hāqā* is used to refer to the marriage contract, and since this term implies stability and reliability, it denotes a covenant that is confirmed and reinforced by a pledge or oath. The adjective *g̲halīẓā* conveys intensity, solidity, and lasting stability, further emphasizing the strength of the covenant. Therefore, the combination of these two words in the context of a marriage bond signifies that, from a Qur’ānic perspective, the marriage covenant is one of the strongest and most valuable human agreements, underscoring the necessity of a deep commitment. For this reason, in the marriage contract, God assigns a role and duty to women based on His divine nature, pledging a firm covenant. In fact, this covenant benefits not only women but also men, fostering their spiritual growth and development. This firm covenant is foundational to the continuity of human communities, starting from the small community of a couple and the family unit, and extending to larger communities and civilizations. It plays a critical role in strengthening the foundation of the family, which, in turn, supports the stability of cities, nations, and civilizations. If the foundation of the family is weakened, the stability of society and civilization is also at risk.

Mystically speaking, women, as the source of creation who carry life within themselves, are inherently closer to the Creator. They find life in the knowledge of their own existence and, as a result, seek to guide the souls of their husbands, children, and society toward the origin of creation. This role aligns with the divine purpose served by God through the

sending of messengers and establishing covenants with the arch prophets. Consequently, such a covenant requires a firm and enduring commitment from the man to ensure a peaceful environment for the wife, allowing her to fulfill her divine role. From a Qur'ānic perspective, while marriage addresses the fulfillment of sexual desires, its divine purpose is to protect humans from sin. The Holy Qur'ān is a source of human creation, and women, too, play a central role in the creation and nurturing of humanity. The purpose of marriage is not just companionship, but to move together toward God. In this journey, God has entrusted women with the responsibility of tending to the soul's needs, while men are tasked with addressing physical needs. Thus, the concept of a firm covenant in the Qur'ānic context is ultimately tied to the spiritual growth and development of humankind. It reflects both the divine covenant made with the prophets and the covenant women make with men as the center of family life. Marriage, in this sense, follows the tradition of the prophets and plays a vital role in maintaining the consistency and durability of religion, nature, and the foundation of civilization. In this light, a woman holds an essential and tangible role in both the physical birth and the spiritual growth and development of humanity.

All of this leads us to conclude that the semantic components of the phrase *mīt̲ḥāqā g̲halīẓā* in its revelatory usage are rooted in the coexistence of several concepts: Allah, the sons of Israel, disobedience, transgression, aggression, the arch prophets, obedience, infallibility, men, and women. This phrase is anchored in the paradigmatic concepts of covenant, loyalty, and the binding bond, which all belong to the same semantic field.

4.5. Cognitive semantic analysis of the phrase mīt̲ḥāqā g̲halīẓā

In cognitive semantics, following the principle of the originality of Qur'anic interpretations, each Qur'anic word is linked to a specific concept and conveys knowledge in a unique way. No two words express the same meaning in exactly the same manner. Therefore, each Qur'anic word has its own distinct function that no other word can fulfill. This applies to the various uses of the word *mīt̲ḥāq* in different contexts, as the word offers a particular aspect of the speaker's knowledge in one context, while in another context, it provides a different aspect of that knowledge. In terms of linguistic synonymy, the meaning of one word transforms into another, meaning the expression containing the first word becomes equivalent to the expression containing the second word (Qaeminia, 2011). Taking this cognitive principle into account and considering the Qur'anic language used to express God's firm covenants and *mīt̲ḥāqā g̲halīẓā*, we can conclude that the language of the Holy Qur'ān is unified and harmonious. It operates in a consistent and interconnected manner, both in the selection of words and in addressing the audience, as well as in the underlying ideas shaping the language. Thus, the different levels of Qur'anic language should not be considered in isolation but rather as part of an integrated whole.

If commentators have used words with similar meanings to interpret mīt̲ḥāq, none of these convey the full essence of the term. The fundamental and core meaning of mīt̲ḥāq is a covenant and agreement accompanied by an oath. Therefore, based on the principle of originality in Qur'anic interpretations, it is evident that only the word mīt̲ḥāq carries the meaning that can fully reflect the depth and significance that God intended for mīt̲ḥāqā g̲halīẓā, thereby excluding other meanings. None of the synonymous words can carry such profound implications, as demonstrated in the interpretations used in the first two verses:

1- "And when We took a covenant from the prophets and from you and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, the son of Mary, and We took from them a solemn covenant"[27]. (Al-Ahzab:7)

2- "And We raised above them a mountain with their covenant and told them to enter the gate bowing down. And We said to them not to transgress on the Sabbath. And We took from them a solemn covenant"[28]. (An-Nisaa':154)

These two verses highlight God's direct interaction with the prophets and the sons of Israel. Since the word *mīṯ̲āq* is described as *g̲halīẓā*, it conveys concepts such as "firm", "impenetrable", and "unbreakable", meaning that neither party to the covenant can break their word. Both are expected to be fully obedient and loyal to the covenant. This understanding is further emphasized in the twenty-first verse of Surah An-Nisaa', where God states:

"And how will you take it, when some of you have already taken it from one another, and they have taken from you a firm covenant?" (An-Nisaa': 21)

And the verses before that, which are about the rulings issued by God, are as follows:

"O you the believers, you are not allowed to take away women's legacy against their will, and take away by force part of what you already gave them unless they do something wrong. Even if you do not like them, probably God knows better there is a benefit in what you seemingly dislike"[29] (An-Nisaa': 19)

"And if you wish to marry again, and one wife has already a great wealth, do not try to take that back from her. Do you intend to take that wealth back from her by committing an evident sin?" (An-Nisaa':20)

The verse following the seventh verse of Surah Al-Ahzab, which addresses the distinction between true believers and disbelievers, warrants reflection: "He will ask the true believers about their truthfulness and has prepared for the disbelievers a painful punishment" [30] (Al-Ahzab: 8). From this, we can draw an important conclusion: the covenant between the two parties involves the implementation of laws by one party and the granting of reward and punishment by the other party. Therefore, when discussing the firm covenant between God, the prophets, and the sons of Israel, both parties of the covenant—those to be rewarded or punished—are clearly defined. Now, a question arises: why is the term *mīṯ̲āq* specifically used in the case of marriage, out of all human contracts and covenants? In response, we can say that God, with the sanctity He has granted to the marriage contract, has distinguished it from other contracts. The marriage covenant is seen as closer to acts of worship than any other contract. The Prophet of Islam said, "I marry to preserve half of the religion" (Kulaini, 1986). This hadith views marriage as a divine act and regards it as an act of worship, emphasizing its sacred and spiritual significance (Javadi Amoli, 2018).

The analysis of the overall context of the Qur'ān, as a single interconnected volume, leads us to the conclusion that the word *mīṯ̲āq* appears three times in the Holy Qur'ān—twice in

---

[27] وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنكَ وَمِن نُّوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

[28] وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمُ ادْخُلُواْ الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لاَ تَعْدُواْ فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

[29] يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَن تَرِثُواْ النِّسَاء كَرْهًا وَلاَ تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُواْ بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلاَّ أَن يَأْتِينَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِن كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَن تَكْرَهُواْ شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

[30] لِيَسْأَلَ الصَّادِقِينَ عَن صِدْقِهِمْ وَأَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

Surah An-Nisaa' and once in Surah Al-Ahzab. The relationship between these two Surahs is noteworthy and warrants examination, as both Surahs are Medinan. In both, civility is discussed; in both, the role of women is emphasized; in both, women's rights are addressed, and the necessity of adhering to divine piety in regard to women's affairs is highlighted. This emphasis suggests the significance of women and their vital role in the construction of civilization. When a woman, by God's command, takes a covenant from a man, the result is the reward or punishment of the man in relation to his closeness to or distance from God. It is in such a secure environment that a woman is meant to unite herself and her family. Therefore, analyzing the Qur'ānic language in expressing the concepts related to *mīṯāqā ġalīẓā* leads us to the conclusion that the Qur'ān's depiction of God's firm covenants manifests in three areas: cognitive, ethical, and practical. This reflects the Qur'ān as an interconnected system with a unique lexical structure, where multiple connections exist, including linguistic, literary, intratextual, contextual, and intertextual connections.

A semantic analysis of the Qur'ān can reveal the relationship between the different intellectual layers of its language, as the Qur'ānic world operates within a "God-centered" system of global ontology. God is placed at the top of the hierarchy of existence and is the focal point of the Qur'ānic language. All instructions and semantic fields in this system ultimately lead back to God. In contrast, in the worldview of pre-Islamic ignorance (Jahiliyyah), man was at the center of the world, and this perspective was reflected in the linguistic structures of that time. However, in the Qur'ānic worldview, God occupies the center of the world, a concept that significantly shapes the language of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ānic language is unified and harmonious, with its instructions unfolding across three levels: cognitive, ethical, and practical. The verses of the Qur'ān are interconnected in numerous ways, and a comprehensive understanding of its linguistic aspects requires attention to these semantic connections. Therefore, a review of the communicative aspects of the verses in the Qur'ānic language, particularly the cognitive and attitudinal layers, provides new strategies for interpretation. One of the most fundamental layers of the Qur'ānic worldview is monotheism.

The Qur'ān presents all of existence within a monotheistic framework, with every element and teaching fitting into this "God-centered" system. Considering the coherence of the semantic and textual relationships in the Qur'ānic worldview, when the Qur'ān instructs a woman to enter into a firm covenant with a man in the context of marriage, and applies the same principle to the guidance provided by the prophets and to the obedience expected from the sons of Israel, it is because all these covenants ultimately serve to bring individuals closer to God Almighty. In a safe and peaceful environment, a woman can flourish and draw closer to God. Additionally, the remembrance of God protects her from succumbing to fleeting pleasures or other sins. In this way, the respect for women's rights by men is not merely a matter of fairness, but a means of creating an environment conducive to spirituality. Under such conditions, a woman can more swiftly achieve monotheism, benefiting herself, her family, and society as a whole. Any form of oppression or mistreatment of a woman—whether through denying her dowry or other injustices—can harm her soul. Such actions may draw her away from unity and into the realm of multiplicity, hindering her from fulfilling her true purpose.

5. Discussion

The first research question explored the relevance of the phrase *mīṯāqā ġalīẓā* in relation to the marriage agreement, as summarized. The analytical findings of this study revealed that *mīṯāqā ġalīẓā* represents a covenant central to the continuity and stability of

human communities, extending from the small community of two individuals and the family unit to larger communities and civilizations. It serves as the foundation that strengthens both the family and, consequently, civilization itself. This is because if the foundation of the family is compromised, the stability of the city, country, and civilization will also be undermined. Upon examining the contexts in which the Holy Qur'ān references *mīṯ̲āq*, it becomes evident that this concept, in the Qur'ān and in heavenly religions, stems from the essence of divine monotheism, influencing all aspects of human life. Any defect in this system can harm both individual and collective existence. From the perspective of the Qur'ān, while marriage fulfills the natural desire for companionship, its divine purpose is to protect individuals from sin. The Qur'ān is fundamentally human-constructive, and women, in this context, also play a role in this constructive process. The purpose of marriage is to foster companionship and empathy in the shared journey towards God. In this regard, God has endowed women with the responsibility to fulfill the spiritual needs, while men are entrusted with providing for the physical needs.

Among the three instances of the word *mīṯ̲āq* in the Holy Qur'ān, two are found in Surah An-Nisaa' and one in Surah Al-Ahzab. The connection between these two surahs is significant and warrants further examination, as both Surahs Al-Ahzab and An-Nisaa' are Medinan. In both, the concepts of civility and the role of women are discussed; women's rights are emphasized, and the necessity of observing divine piety in relation to women's affairs is highlighted. This repeated emphasis underscores the importance of women and their constructive role in society. The discussion of *mīṯ̲āq* and *mīṯ̲āqā ġ̲alīẓā* in these Qur'anic contexts is ultimately linked to the spiritual and moral growth of humanity. It pertains both to the divine covenant taken by the prophets and to the covenant taken by women from men in the family and marriage — both of which follow the prophetic tradition and are crucial to the stability and continuity of religion, as well as to the foundation of nature and true civilization. In this context, a woman plays a significant and tangible role in the birth and development of man, both in the physical sense and in his spiritual and moral growth.

The second research question explored the historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic features of the phrase mīṯ̲āqā ġ̲alīẓā in the Holy Qur'ān, with the results summarized as follows. The historical semantic analysis of the word mīṯ̲āq, an Arabic term, revealed that its meaning evolved during the time of the Qur'ānic revelation. The Holy Qur'ān thus became a record of covenants and agreements made by God with Adam, the descendants of Adam, the prophets, and various nations. Following the revelation of the Qur'ān, all related moral values are connected to the concept of a covenant between mankind and God.The descriptive semantic analysis showed that mīṯ̲āq occurs 23 times in 21 verses in the Holy Qur'ān, while mīṯ̲āqā ġ̲alīẓā appears three times with detailed descriptions. These references include: God's covenant with the arch prophets, God's covenant with the sons of Israel, and the covenant in the marriage contract where women take a pledge from their husbands. By analyzing words semantically related to mīṯ̲āq or those closely connected, we concluded that while these words may seem similar to mīṯ̲āq, none possess the same depth, layers, or semantic weight. Furthermore, in the verses containing mīṯ̲āqā ġ̲alīẓā, the word mīṯ̲āq is combined with the adjective ġ̲alīẓā, which intensifies the strength and solemnity of the covenant.

The cognitive analysis of the word *mīṯ̲āq* in the Holy Qur'ān reveals that it appears twice in Surah An-Nisaa' and once in Surah Al-Ahzab. The connection between these two Surahs is significant and warrants further examination, as both are Medinan. In both surahs, civility

is discussed, the role of women is emphasized, and women's rights are highlighted alongside the importance of observing divine piety in matters concerning women. This consistent focus suggests that the Qur'ān places great importance on women and their role in the development of civilization. When a woman, by God's command, enters into a covenant with a man, the outcome is tied to the reward or punishment of the man, determined by his closeness to or distance from God. This covenant provides a safe environment where a woman is meant to unite herself and her family, fulfilling her divine role.

6. Conclusion

In the Holy Qur'ān, the covenant between God and His servants is frequently mentioned, with an emphasis on the strictness of these covenants, often expressed as mīṯāqā ġalīẓā. This study utilized semantic analysis, a branch of linguistics, to explore how this phrase is employed in the Qur'ān. The initial investigation revealed that the strict covenant implied by this phrase appears three times: once between God and the arch prophets, once between God and the sons of Israel, and once between husband and wife. The historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic analyses of this phrase demonstrate that the Qur'ān affirms and strengthens these binding covenants in various ways, while also outlining measures to prevent their weakening or neglect.

The semantic analysis of the Qur'ān reveals the relationship between the various intellectual layers of its language, as the Qur'ānic worldview is fundamentally "God-centered" in its global ontology. In this system, God occupies the highest point of existence, forming the focal point of the Qur'ānic language. All the instructions and semantic fields in the Qur'an ultimately revolve around God. In contrast, the worldview of the Age of Ignorance placed man at the center of the world, and this perspective was reflected in its linguistic layers. However, in the Qur'anic worldview, God is at the center, and women and their roles are valued in distinct and profound ways. One example of this is how God uses language in His Holy Book to articulate women's rights, particularly in the context of marriage. Qur'anic instructions are manifested at multiple cognitive, ethical, and practical levels, with the verses of the Qur'an interrelated in various ways to underscore this truth.

One limitation of the present study is the lack of similar research on the phrase mīṯāqā ġalīẓā in the Holy Qur'an or in religious literature, which restricted the ability to compare findings. Another limitation is that the study could have yielded more comprehensive results if it had employed a natural language processing approach, utilizing computerized and digital tools to search for and analyze the occurrences and co-occurrences of the phrase in the Holy Qur'ān. As this study demonstrated, semantic analysis is an effective tool for exploring the meaning of words and word combinations, offering deeper insight into the text. The study examined the historical evolution of the phrase *mīṯāqā ġalīẓā* and highlighted how its meaning transformed from pre-Islamic times during the Ignorance Age to the interpretation it took on in the Holy Qur'an. By analyzing the linguistic features of the phrase, the study emphasized its unique and irreplaceable role within the Qur'anic context. Furthermore, it underscored the respect that God accords to women upon entering married life, placing the responsibility on men to treat them fairly in marriage. This finding can serve as a counterpoint to the misconceptions and negative portrayals of women's roles in Islam perpetuated by mass media, aiming to undermine the Islamic perspective on women's rights and dignity.

Given the limited research on the historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic analyses of similar words and word combinations in the Holy Qur'ān and Islamic sources, it is highly

recommended that researchers conduct similar studies within Islamic literature to shed light on Islam's true, appreciative outlook on women and their creative and productive roles in society. Specifically, studies on the Holy Qur'ān should focus on the principle of authenticity of the content, exploring why God chose certain words or phrases (over others) to convey specific ideas to the public. Researchers can investigate the reasons behind the irreplaceability of certain words or phrases that are repeatedly used in the Holy Book to refer to various social events, with marriage being just one example. Semantic analysis can guide researchers in identifying the unique qualities of these words, which make them the best fit for expressing specific concepts in the Qur'anic context. Future researchers are also encouraged to employ new computerized methods of language processing to examine occurrences and co-occurrences of relevant terms in the Holy Book, keeping pace with the latest developments in the global field of semantic analysis.

References

Al-Askari, A. (1974). *Al-Farooq al-Laghuyeh*. Cairo: Maktabte al-Qudousi.

Al-Saleh, S. (1962). *Studies in Fiqh Al-Gha*. Beirut: Al-Maktabeh Al-Ahliyeh.

Amid, H. (2010). *Persian literature*. Tehran: Parmis Publications.

Cooper, R., & Retoré, C. (2017). An outline of type-theoretical approaches to lexical semantics. *Journal of Language Modelling, 5*(2), 165-178.

Geelhaar, T., Kuchenbuch, L., Perreaux, N., Schiel, J. & Schürch I. (2023). *Historical Semantics – A Vade Mecum*. Austria: Claude Chevaleyre.

Hafani, M. (1970). *Ijaz al-Bani between theory and application*. Cairo: Majlis al-Ali for Islamic Affairs.

Ibn Manzoor, M. (1993). *Arab language, lexicography*. Beirut: Dar Sadir.

Ibn-Janni, A. (1982). *Al-Khazaida*. Beirut.

Izutsu, T. (2002). *God and man in the Qur'an*. Tehran: Soroush.

Izutsu, T. (2003). *The God and the Human Being in the Holy Qur'ān*. Translated to Farsi by Ahmad Aram. Tehran: Enteshar Corporation.

Javadi Amoli, A. (2018). *Tasnim*. Qom: Isra Publishing Center.

Kahala, O. R. (2014). *Social studies in the Islamic era*. Damascus: Al-Mutabah al-Taawunieh.

Khoshmanesh, A. (2013). Marriage as a great covenant, comparative semantics of the firm covenant in the Holy Qur'ān. *Kitab Qeym Quarterly, 2*(6), 75-105.

Kulaini, M. (1986). *Al-Kafi.* Tehran: Dar Al-Kitab al-Islamiya Publications.

Malakootikhah, I. (2011). The semantics of the firm covenant in the marriage contract and the study of the fundamental components of loyalty to it. *Strategic Studies of Women, 13*(52), 111-146.

Mostafavi, H. (1981). *Al-Habiq fi Kalmat al-Qur'an al-Karim*. Tehran: Book Translation and Publishing Company.

Qaeminia, A. (2010). *Text biology, Islamic culture and thought research*. Tehran: Publishing Organization Institute.

Qaeminia, A. (2011). *Cognitive semantics*. Tehran: Publishing Organization Institute.

Qurashi, A. (1992). *Dictionary of the Qur'ān*. Tehran: Dar Al-Kuttub.

Raghib Isfahani, H. (1995). *The vocabulary of the Qur'an*. Tehran: Dar-al-Qalam Publications.

Rommani, A. (1942). *Al-alfaaz al-mutaradfa*. Cairo: Al-Masuaat Press.

Roshan, B. (2019). *An introduction to semantics*. Tehran: Ilm Publications.

Safavi, K. (2004). *An introduction to semantics*. Tehran: Sura Mehr Publications.

Seyedi, S.H. (2015). *Semantic changes in the Qur'ān.* Tehran: Sokhan Publications.

Ullmann, S. (1953). Descriptive semantics and linguistic typology, *WORD, 9*(3), 225-240.

Waqdan, N.B. (2014). *The authenticity and preservation of the Holy Qur'ān*. https://alimanlight.com/archives/3250

Yousof, A. (2006). *Derasat Faniyeh in Al-Qur'an al-Karim*. Damascus: Darul Maktabi,

Zamakhshari, M. (1986). Al-*Kashf on the facts of Ghawamaz al-Tanzir*. Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi.

Zubaydi, M. (1993). *Taj al-Arus*. Beirut: Dar al-Fakr.

International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies

Journal homepage: http://ttais.akhs.bou.ac.ir/

A Study of Qur'ānic Narrative Grammar: A Narratological Approach to the Accounts of the Creation Story in the Qur'ān

Abolfazl Horri[1*]

English Department, Faculty of Letters and Languages, Arak University, Arak, Iran
* Corresponding author: horri2004tr@gmail.com

https://doi.org/10.22081/ttais.2025.70121.1041

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: 26 October 2023
Revised: 22 November 2023
Accepted: 11 March 2024

Keywords:
Creation Stories in the Qur'ān,
Islamic Teachings in Qur'ānic Narratives,
Narrative Grammar,
Narrative Structure in the Qur'ān,
Theories of Narratology.

ABSTRACT

This article explores the narrative structure in the Qur'ānic surahs related to the story of creation. It begins with a brief introduction to the theoretical concepts of narrative grammar. The study then examines how this narrative grammar functions within the selected surahs at both micro and macro levels. At the micro level, the main events of each surah are outlined, identifying their fixed and variable elements. Additionally, the composition of these narratives is analyzed in terms of temporal, spatial, and causal principles. At the macro level, the study highlights the connection between these surahs, the prophetic biography, and the core teachings of Islam, including monotheism (Tawhid), prophethood (Nubuwwah), resurrection (Ma'ad), and divine justice ('Adl). These stories align seamlessly with the overarching themes and objectives of their respective surahs. Through Adam's creation, God affirms His oneness (Tawhid) and appoints prophets to guide Adam's descendants. In contrast, Iblis and his followers oppose the prophets and the righteous. However, divine justice ultimately ensures that victory belongs to the righteous, and Adam and his progeny return to God (resurrection). Thus, the core theme of Adam's story revolves around three key axes: the call to worship, arrogance and rejection, and the salvation of believers alongside the downfall of disbelievers—an axis that extends to other Qur'ānic narratives as well. The findings of this study deepen our understanding of the Qur'ān's narrative structures and their connection to divine teachings. Furthermore, they provide a foundation for further research in narratology, semantics, and the intertextual analysis of religious texts.

How to cite this article: Horri, A. (2024). A Study of Qur'ānic Narrative Grammar: A Narratological Approach to the Accounts of the Creation Story in the Qur'ān. *International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies*, *2*(2), 138-155. doi: 10.22081/ttais.2025.70121.1041

1. Introduction

Storytelling has been an integral part of human culture since ancient times. As Barthes (1966/1977) aptly observed, storytelling is universal—there have never been, nor will there ever be, people unfamiliar with stories. From myths and epics to sacred texts, narratives have long served as vehicles for conveying values, beliefs, and traditions. Among these, divine scriptures such as the Torah and the Qur'ān hold a distinctive place. While the Bible—particularly the Old Testament—is deeply rooted in a storytelling tradition (Alter & Kermode, 1978; Bar-Efrat, 1997), the Qur'ān's use of narratives goes beyond artistic expression or entertainment. Instead, Qur'ānic stories function as a profound medium for moral and spiritual guidance (Horri, 2009).

Although the Qur'ān recounts real events involving prophets and past communities—some of which may be categorized as retributive tales (Horri, 2024)—storytelling did not occupy the same central role in early Islamic culture as the study of rhetoric and eloquence. However, it is noteworthy that approximately one-quarter of the Qur'ān is dedicated to stories (Al-Jaberi, 2020). In recent times, scholarly focus on Qur'ānic narratives has expanded beyond rhetoric and style to include the study of narrative stylistics (Horri, 2009). This approach involves analyzing Qur'ānic stories through the lens of narratology and narrative grammar, which is the central concern of this paper (Horri, 2009). This paper aims to address the key question:

- ✓ How can narrative theory and grammar be applied to the analysis of Qur'ānic stories?

By utilizing narratological concepts and examining various accounts of the Creation story—particularly in Surah Sa'd—this study seeks to propose a theoretical and practical framework for defining, analyzing, and interpreting Qur'ānic narratives. This approach not only illuminates the Qur'ān's storytelling techniques but also deepens our understanding of its pedagogical and spiritual functions.

2. Literature Review

This section is divided into two sub-sections: the theoretical framework and a review of the most relevant literature**.**

2.1. Narrative Grammar as a Linguistic Framework in Qur'anic Stories

Narrative grammar in Qur'ānic stories operates similarly to the subject, verb, and object in natural languages. In linguistic theory, the subject performs the action, and the verb links the subject to the object. In narrative theory, however, the "subject" of the story is represented by the character, who drives the events forward. Just as a syntactic structure in a sentence is formed by the subject and the verb, a narrative structure is constructed through characters (the agents) and events (the actions).

Scholars in narrative grammar focus on various aspects of the story. Propp (1928/1968), for example, emphasizes 'events' and 'roles', which he refers to as 'functions' and 'spheres of action', respectively. Bremond (1977) highlights the sequence of events, while Greimas (1971) integrates both events and characters, calling them 'actions' and 'actants'. Todorov (2000), in addition to addressing events and characters, also considers other crucial elements like time and perspective, which are essential for analyzing narrative structure. Similarly,

Barthes (1966/1977) views events, characters, and narrative action not only as components at the sentence level but as fundamental elements of the entire narrative discourse.

2.1.1. Narrative Surface Structure

Analyzing the narrative surface structure involves three stages: recounting the events, categorizing them, and determining their relationships. The first stage, recounting events, simplifies them into narrative propositions that identify the agent (subject) and the action (verb). For example, in Surah 12 (Joseph's dream), Joseph is the agent, and "dreaming" is the action. The second stage involves categorizing events into actions and happenings. Actions are those where the character is the agent, while happenings involve the character as the patient. Furthermore, actions can be classified as either external or internal events. These components interact through five key principles: time, causality, space, character, and internal relationships. The interaction of these principles forms micro-sequences, which combine to create macro-sequences, ultimately forming the complete narrative.

2.1.2. Narrative Deep Structure

While the surface structure examines the arrangement of events at the micro-sequence level, the deep structure delves into the underlying semantic relationships that govern these sequences. The deep structure serves as the abstract framework of the narrative, shaping its meaning. As Prince (2003) explains, the deep structure consists of universal syntactic-semantic representations, which are transformed into the surface structure through a set of rules. Russian Formalists differentiate between the surface structure (syuzhet) and the deep structure (fabula), with the former representing the narrative discourse and the latter referring to the story itself. In this analysis, the deep structure will focus on the semantic relationships between events in the Qur'anic Creation story. These relationships offer valuable insights into the overarching themes of the narrative, including the fall of Adam, the rebellion of Iblis, and the eventual restoration of order.

2.2. The Review of the Related Literature

Recently, there has been a growing trend among scholars to apply critical and narratological approaches to Qur'ānic stories. Horri has made significant contributions to this emerging field by examining various narratological aspects of Qur'ānic narratives. In one of his Persian papers, Horri (2010) explored the narrative time and place in Qur'ānic stories. In another study, Horri (2009) discussed Qur'ānic terminologies related to the concept of story, including terms such as 'qasas', 'hadith', and 'naba''. Furthermore, Horri (2023b) analyzed the role of character and characterization in Qur'ānic narratives. In his more recent work, Horri (2024) investigated the narrative structure in a selection of punishment-oriented stories from the Qur'ān. His goal was to analyze both the surface and deep structures of these narratives to determine whether a comprehensive and overarching structure could be identified for their analysis. Additionally, Horri (2023a) examined the typology of speech and thought representation in selected Qur'ānic stories, providing both a theoretical and practical framework for analyzing these aspects within the Qur'ānic discourse. Horri (2023b) also demonstrated how Persian and English translators have rendered the simile marker 'k'ann', one of the most common words of resemblance, across 25 verses of the Qur'ān. Building on Horri's (2024) work, this paper aims to apply a narratological approach to various versions of the Creation story, with a particular focus on Surah Sa'd.

2. Methodology

The practical framework and methodology of this paper are grounded in the widely accepted distinction in narratology between two levels of narrative: **story** and **text**. This distinction provides a structured approach for analyzing the Qur'ānic Creation story as the case study. Specifically, this paper focuses on the *fabula* (the chronological sequence of events) in the Qur'ānic Creation story, examining its deep structure by analyzing the events, their arrangement, and the relationships between them. These elements are explored in accordance with the narrative syntax present in the relevant surahs.

The theoretical framework is rooted in **structural narratology**, drawing on the works of prominent narrative grammarians such as Propp (1928/1968), Bremond (1977), Greimas (1971), and Todorov (2000). These scholars provide foundational models for analyzing narratives at the story level, emphasizing the structural principles underlying the organization of events and characters. This framework informs the **methodology**, which is both conceptual and non-empirical:

- **Conceptual**: The study aims to reinterpret and adapt key concepts from the theoretical framework (structural narratology) to analyze the Creation story in the Qur'ān. It seeks to refine and apply narrative theory to Qur'ānic storytelling, particularly at the story level.

- **Non-empirical**: Instead of relying on external data or experimental methods, the analysis is grounded in textual evidence. Qur'ānic stories, specifically the Creation story, are examined through the lens of narrative grammar, focusing on their inherent structural elements.

This combination of theoretical and methodological approaches ensures a systematic and rigorous analysis of Qur'ānic narratives, contributing to both the fields of narratology and Qur'ānic studies

3. Analysis

3.1. Narrative Grammar in the Creation Stories of the Qur'ān

The story of Adam's creation and his descent to Earth is found across multiple Meccan and Medinan surahs in the Qur'ān. Unlike the Book of Genesis, which presents a chronological and continuous narrative, the Qur'ān offers a series of brief, concentrated accounts of the story. Each surah highlights specific events from Adam's life, often repeating them with distinct narrative styles in different surahs. In other words, unlike the direct and linear account in Genesis, the Qur'ān does not present the story of Adam in a straightforward manner. Instead, readers must gather various scattered episodes from Adam's life, akin to pearls, and thread them together to form a cohesive historical or chronological sequence.

Thus, unlike in Genesis, where the reader remains "detached from" the story, the Qur'ān invites the reader to actively participate "alongside" the narrative. The completion of the story in the Qur'ān depends on the reader's dynamic engagement with the text. From a narratological perspective, the reader in the Qur'ān does not engage with the story as a straightforward plot; instead, they interact with the text itself. The reader must navigate

through different surahs to piece together the main story, or fabula, of Adam. Qur'ānic narratives present fragmented segments of stories rather than a continuous chronological sequence of events.

In the Qur'ān, the focus lies more on the *text*, the act of narration, *al-khitab* (the discourse), and the storytelling style rather than on the story itself. Repetition of certain events serves not only rhetorical functions, categorized under "variation in expression," but also helps the reader recall key dispersed events from different surahs. Most importantly, each surah introduces one or two new narrative functions, adding incremental information and advancing the story. The presence or absence of these functions renders the narrative style of the story in one surah different from its presentation in another. In the following, first, we attempt to examine the narrative surface structure of the creation story based on the Makkan or Medinan nature of the surahs, following the chronological order in which they were revealed to the Prophet over 23 years. This approach allows us to immerse ourselves in the story and experience it in the same way the initial audience heard it.

3.2. Analyzing the Surface Structure of the Creation Story Based on Meccan and Medinan Surahs

The creation story—specifically, the story of Adam and his descent to Earth—holds a prominent place within the collection of Meccan narratives, categorized by Al-Jabiri (2020) as a foundational or archetypal story. Though not inherently a story of retribution, it sets the stage for other Qur'ānic narratives and may be seen as God's introductory narrative in His role as the ultimate narrator, with subsequent stories drawing inspiration from it. The journey away from and the longing to return to the original state of being begins with this very story.

The creation story can also be organized according to the chronological revelation of the Meccan and Medinan surahs as follows: Surah Sa'd, Al-A'raf, Ta-Ha, Al-Isra, Al-Hijr, Al-Kahf, and Al-Baqarah. While the overarching theme of human creation remains consistent across these surahs, narrative style and phrasing vary. Analyzing the surface structure of Adam's creation story within these surahs reveals three common events: God's command to the angels to prostrate before Adam, the angels' obedience to this command, and Iblis's defiance.

Adam's story appears in seven surahs: six Meccan surahs (Sa'd [38:71-85], Al-A'raf [7:11-25], Ta-Ha [20:115-124], Al-Isra [17:61-65], Al-Hijr [15:26-44], and Al-Kahf [18:50]) and one Medinan surah (Al-Baqarah [2:30-38]). Surah Sa'd is the first to mention Adam's story, and Surah Al-Kahf is the last Meccan surah to reference it. Surah Al-Baqarah, the first surah revealed after the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina, also recounts the story. We see the same theme narrated differently across these surahs.

In the following analysis, we will focus on the Qur'ānic account of Adam's story in Surah Sa'd [38:71-85], examining how the single theme of human creation and Iblis's rebellion is expressed through two distinct narrative approaches in terms of language and presentation of information.

3.3. the Story of Creation in Surah Sa'd

Surah Sa'd, the 38th chapter of the Qur'ān in the order of revelation, was revealed after Surah Qamar and before Surah Araf. This chapter is considered one of the "Mathani" chapters, as its main stories and messages are reiterated in other chapters. However, this

repetition does not imply mere redundancy but rather a "variation in expression," conveying a single concept in diverse linguistic styles. According to tradition, this chapter was revealed when the Quraysh approached Abu Talib to dissuade the Prophet from calling people to Islam, using various promises and temptations. In response, the Prophet firmly declared that even if they placed the sun in his right hand and the moon in his left, he would not abandon his mission.

3.3.1. Structure and Themes of Surah Sa'd

Al-Jaberi (2021) characterizes this chapter as containing short verses with a rhythmic structure, and in terms of themes, it emphasizes monotheism, the rejection of idolatry, prophecy, the afterlife, and social issues. He believes that these concepts are reinforced through the repeated mention of stories of the prophets. This chapter can be divided into four main sections:

1. Verses on the Prophet's mission and biography (verses 1-11): This section begins with the disjointed letter 'Sa'd' and highlights the Qur'ān as a source of remembrance and warning for disbelievers.

2. Verses on Qur'ānic stories (verses 12-70): This section includes stories of various prophets, such as David (verses 17-26), Solomon (verses 30-40), Job (verses 41-44), and references to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

3. Verses on the people of paradise and hell (verses 49-64): This part describes the blessings of paradise and the torments of hellfire.

4. Verses on the story of creation (verses 71-85): This segment, which narrates the creation of Adam and Iblis's defiance, emphasizes the role of revelation and the Prophet's position.

3.3.2. the Story of Creation and Its Link to Revelation

The story of Adam's creation in verses 71-85 is the climax of this surah. In this story, God commands the angels to bow to Adam; the angels obey, but Iblis defies this command out of arrogance. Consequently, God expels him from His presence. Here, the Qur'ān stresses that the Prophet was not physically present among the angels to witness this story; instead, this knowledge was revealed to him through divine inspiration. This point aims to reassure the disbelievers that what the Prophet conveys is directly from God, and they will soon learn the truth of this message.

In sum, the story of creation in Surah Sa'd, beyond serving as an instructive narrative, illustrates the profound link between divine revelation and the Prophet. Through elements such as God's command to the angels, Iblis's rebellion, and the emphasis on the Prophet's role in conveying divine messages, the narrative invites the audience to a deeper understanding of prophecy and the authenticity of revelation in the face of the Quraysh's skepticism.

Now, after providing a general overview of the structure and content of Surah Sa'd, we will focus on the grammar of the creation story as presented in this Surah. Following a description of the surface structure and deep structure of the story, we will also examine the intertextual relationships between this narrative and other stories mentioned in the Surah, as

well as its connections to the Prophetic biography. Notably, Surah Sa'd (verses 71–85) is the first chapter among the early Meccan narratives to recount the creation story:

When thy Lord said to the angels, 'See, I am creating a mortal of clay, (71) when I have shaped him, and breathed My spirit in him, fall you down, bowing before him!' (72) Then the angels bowed themselves all together, (73) save Iblis; he waxed proud, and was one of the unbelievers. (74) Said He, 'What prevented thee to bow thyself, when I commanded thee? Art thou waxed proud, or art thou of the lofty ones?' (75) Said he, 'I am better than he; Thou createdst me of fire, and him Thou createdst of clay.' (76) Said He, 'Then go thou forth hence; thou art accursed. (77) Upon thee shall rest My curse, till the Day of Doom.' (78) Said he, 'My Lord, respite me till the day they shall be raised.' (79) Said He, 'Thou art among the ones that are respited (80) until the day of the known time.' (81) Said he, 'Then by Thy might I will pervert them, every one, (82) excepting Thy servants among them that are sincere.' (83) Said He, 'The truth is, and the truth I say: (84) I shall assuredly fill Gehenna with thee, and with whosoever of them follows thee, all together.' (85) **(Arberry's translation).**

3.3.3. the Narrative Grammar of Creation in Surah Sa'd

According to the principles of narrative grammar that we discussed, every narrative text consists of a surface structure and a deep narrative structure. Each surface narrative structure has two main components: events and entities. An event represents either a physical or mental activity performed by entities (characters) as agents in a temporal and spatial axis—whether it's a physical action, a mental perception, or an emotional response. Simply put, the surface narrative structure comprises an event (action or occurrence) + entities (characters in the roles of agent/subject and object/recipient) + setting (time and place). For example, in Surah Sa'd, verse 71:

"When your Lord said to the angels, 'I will create a human being from clay'" (71).

The surface narrative structure here consists of two events: 'said' (mental) and 'create' (physical); the agent (God); the object (the angels); the time ('when'); and the setting ('the Divine Court'). In essence, each surface structure represents a narrative sentence composed of a subject and object along with an action; or in other terms, an agent, a recipient, and an act. The subject and object can be human, non-human, or even supernatural, such as God and the angels. Here, God acts as the agent or initiator of action, while the angels serve as the recipients, fulfilling the role of characters, though God can also be seen as the narrative voice.

These two characters can engage in various types of actions: non-verbal physical actions, speech acts, cognitive actions, sensory perceptions, and emotional reactions. However, listing each individual event would be time-consuming and overly detailed, so we will consider each verse as the unit of analysis, rather than focusing solely on each isolated event. This approach allows us to streamline the list of events within each surface narrative structure in the creation story of each surah, limiting the analysis to the main events without committing to exhaustive details of each occurrence.

Now, we can summarize the main events of the surface narrative structure of the creation story in Surah Sa'd in the following propositions:

1. God informs the angels of the creation of Adam from clay (Sa'd 71).

2. God commands the angels to prostrate to the human after the soul is breathed into him (Sa'd 72).

3. The angels prostrate (Sa'd 73).

4. Satan refuses (Sa'd 74).

5. God asks Satan the reason for his refusal (Sa'd 75).

6. Satan argues that he was created from fire and the human from clay (Sa'd 76).

7. Satan is expelled from the Divine presence and is cursed forever (Sa'd 77).

8. Satan asks God for respite until the Day of Judgment (Sa'd 79).

9. God grants his request (Sa'd 80).

10. Satan swears to deceive all humans except for the pure-hearted servants of God (Sa'd 83).

11. God warns Satan and his followers (Sa'd 85).

Interestingly, some of these events, which are all considered "nuclei" (from Chatman's (1987) perspective), correspond to some of Propp's proposed functions. For example, God's informing the angels about the creation of Adam corresponds to the "informing" function, marked as 'St.' Satan's refusal corresponds to the 'maleficence' function, marked as 'A'. God's questioning of Satan for his refusal corresponds to the "inquiry" function, marked as 'E'. Satan's reasoning corresponds to the 'baseless claims' function, marked as 'L'. Satan's deception of humans corresponds to the 'deception/treachery' function, marked as 'Et'. Finally, the expulsion and cursing of Satan and the punishment of Satan and his followers in Hell correspond to the 'punishment' function, marked as 'U'. These functions have a general but imprecise alignment.

Now, we can combine these events based on their themes, subjects, or adjacency, and present them as a micro-sequence, which can then be named through re-narration, as propositions or statements. From Todorov's perspective, the actions in these events either change a state (God creates the human), rebuke something (God rebukes Satan), or have a punitive or retributive aspect (God punishes Satan and his followers). At the same time, each of these events or narrative propositions (in Todorov's terms) has three aspects: either they declare something with certainty (God informs about the creation of Adam—indicative mood); or express a desire or wish (the angels' prostration to Adam—desiderative mood); or are definitively carried out (God punishes Satan—imperative mood).

From Todorov's perspective, we can combine these events or narrative propositions based on temporal (based on the principle of 'what happens next'), logical (based on the principle of 'therefore, because, and so on'), and spatial relationships (based on 'symmetry, deviation, repetition, equivalence, etc.') to form a micro-sequence or a micro-sequence/ progression:

1. **Micro-sequence of God's command (71-72)**: Based on the temporal and logical relationship, as God is the cause of all phenomena.

2. **Micro-sequence of accepting the command/refusal from pride (73-74; 76)**: Spatial relationship.

3. **Micro-sequence of God's rebuke and punishment (75 and 77)**: Logical relationship.

4. **Micro-sequence of Satan requesting respite/ confrontation (79 and 82-83)**: Logical/spatial relationship.

5. **Micro-sequence of God's warning and the fate of Satan and his followers (85)**: Temporal and logical relationship.

Interestingly, Micro-sequence 2 aligns with the function pair "command and violation of the command," while Micro-sequence 5 aligns with the function pair "battle and victory" in Propp's model. Furthermore, from Todorov's (2000) perspective, these micro-sequences or progressions combine in three ways: **encompassing** (placing one progression inside another), **chain** (either in consecutive chronological order or balanced in parallel), and **alternating** (mentioning two or more progressions alternately, either regularly or irregularly). Bremond also identifies three types of sequence combinations: **chain**, **encompassing**, and **linking**. According to Bremond (1973), micro-sequences are either **progressive sequences** (moving from imbalance to balance) or **disorder** (moving from balance to imbalance).

In this narrative structure of the creation story, which is of the type of pre-existing/post-event narrative, the story begins with the proposition of God's informing the angels about the creation of Adam from clay. The events are chained together based on a chronological time sequence. Satan's act of disobedience takes the narrative back to the creation phase (temporal regression/backward flashback). The narrative returns to the chronological path, and the events chain again. Then, with Satan's request for respite, the narrative moves forward (temporal progression/flash forward). The story concludes with these previous events.

Additionally, from Levi-Strauss's perspective, these micro-sequences foster the opposing mythical pairs of "good and evil," which are not only part of this segment of the creation story but also pervade the overall structure of Qur'ānic stories and, more importantly, the Qur'ānic discourse. Here, the main opposition is between God and the angels (Satan is initially one of the angels)

This story, on one hand, establishes inter-surah and inter-narrative relationships with other stories of the prophets within the same surah, other surahs that address creation narratives, and even with the Prophet's biography (*Sīra*). As previously mentioned, Surah Sa'd is one of the 'Mathāni' surahs, which contains several Qur'ānic stories. The phrase 'Sa'd and the Qur'ān, the bearer of reminder' in the first verse treats the Qur'ān as a reminder, referring to these Qur'ānic stories that it recounts. Contrary to most exegeses, Saad Abdul-Muttalib 'Adl (2009) believes that 'Sa'd' refers to the disbelievers who slandered the Prophet, falsely accused him of sorcery, lies, and the fabrication of the Qur'ān, while also rejecting the concept of divine oneness. However, God reassures the Prophet that all of these accusations and efforts will ultimately fail.

To comfort and soothe the Prophet's heart, God recounts the stories of past nations who, like the Quraysh, denied their Prophet and opposed him. Thus, through these stories, the

Qur'ān encourages the Prophet to remain steadfast in his mission to call the Quraysh to monotheism, urging him to follow the example of the previous prophets and remain patient and persistent. Interestingly, before the creation story is introduced, the surah asks the Prophet to only serve as a warner, stating that he is not privy to the knowledge of angels or their affairs, and that the truth rests solely with God. Following this, the description of heavenly blessings and the consequences of the afterlife thematically connects the earlier verses to the creation story.

In this section, part of the creation narrative is mentioned, including the creation of Adam from clay, the dialogue between God and humanity, Satan's refusal to bow to Adam, and God's granting of respite to Satan. The primary emphasis in these verses is not to provide a full account of the creation story, but rather to compare Satan's pride and arrogance in refusing to bow to Adam, despite God's command, with the pride and obstinacy of the Quraysh, who similarly reject God's command and refuse to accept the prophetic message of Muhammad

In terms of inter-narrative relationships, the stories of peoples like 'Ād, Thamūd, and Lot address the Quraysh, urging them to take heed of the fates of those who once inhabited the same land long before them, which has now temporarily passed into the Quraysh's possession. At the same time, the stories of prophets like David, Solomon, and Job are directed specifically toward the Prophet. David and Solomon possessed great wealth and power and were constantly at risk of being captivated by worldly glitters and allurements. Al-Jabiri (2021) points out David's love for women and Solomon's love for power and status. Similarly, the Quraysh attempted to tempt the Prophet by offering him wealth, prosperity, and vast influence, paralleling the situations of David and Solomon.

However, just as David, after judging a dispute between two adversaries—who were, in fact, angels—realizes that he is undergoing a divine test, he repents, prostrating and turning back to God. The Prophet, too, is urged to learn from David's experience. While David, upon realizing he had not acted rightly, immediately repented in prostration, Satan, despite knowing he was bound to obey God's command, refused to prostrate to Adam and did not repent. Interestingly, the story of Job also exemplifies the promise Satan makes in the creation narrative to mislead all humankind, except for God's chosen servants. Job, along with David and Solomon, counts among these devoted servants of God, immune to Satan's misguidance. In this way, Solomon's story connects to both the creation narrative and the Prophet's biography.

Thus, the story of Solomon, along with those of other prophets, conceptually and contextually intertwines with the creation story and the Prophet's biography, forming intertextual and inter-narrative linkages.

Meanwhile, if we consider each of these stories as having its own individual sequence, we find that they are interconnected in terms of causal and logical relationships, as Todorov would describe, forming an environmental and internal sequence embedded within the main framework of Surah Sa'd. This surah functions as an all-encompassing narrative that situates each of these stories within its larger purpose. As Al-Jabiri summarizes, 'The Prophet's steadfastness against the temptations of the Quraysh is akin to the resilience of David and Solomon {and of Job and other prophets}, while the pride of the Quraysh, astonished that someone other than the elites of Mecca has been chosen for this mission, mirrors the arrogance of Iblis.'

Most importantly, the inclusion of the creation narrative within this surah serves as a reminder that the Prophet did not fabricate the Qur'ān, as the Quraysh assumed; rather, it is divine speech revealed by God, with the Prophet acting as a mere warner. Thus, the closing verses of the surah link conceptually, textually, narratively, and contextually to its opening verses, particularly with the Qur'ān described as a "reminder" or *dhikr*. Notably, Surah Sa'd is among the first Meccan surahs to reference the creation story within its narrative structure and themes, although other segments of the creation story appear in different Meccan surahs, each adapted to the specific context of its respective surah.

Moreover, all these segments of the creation narrative in both Meccan and Medinan surahs create intertextual, inter-sura, and inter-narrative connections. For instance, we will examine the creation story in Surah Sa'd alongside its counterpart in Surah Al-Hijr. Examining all these narrative structures ultimately provides a foundation for a deep structural analysis of the creation story, which we will address in the appropriate section.

In essence, this surah provides the first account of the creation of Adam (see the inter-sura analysis with Surah Al-Hijr below), with this account in the latter part of the surah setting the stage for its continuation in Surah Al-A'raf. As Al-Jabiri notes, "Iblis's arrogance in refusing to prostrate to Adam is similar to the pride of the Quraysh elite... In response, God commanded Iblis to descend from heaven to earth to find his true place among the lowly."

This layered approach in Surah Sa'd draws not only from narrative interconnections but also from a literary and thematic technique that resonates through other Qur'ānic stories, much like the interwoven nature of narratological elements Abolfazl has been exploring in Qur'ānic storytelling. This method mirrors how these layered stories, embedded in multiple surahs, resonate with one another and with themes in the Prophet's own experience.

3.3.4. Analyzing the Narrative Surface Structure of Creation Story Versions Based on the Historical Sequence of Surahs in the Holy Qur'ān

As we have discussed, the narrative surface structure (in this case, the creation of Adam) consists of events that are conveyed through retelling or narration, capturing the essence of the events. This recounting of events can be presented in the form of event-labels or titles, expressed as phrases or sentences. For example, in Surah Al-Baqarah (verses 30-33), we find a series of verses that narrate the creation of Adam and the angels' objection to it.

This layered narrative recounting reflects the historical evolution of the storytelling style across the surahs, where the creation of Adam is repeatedly revisited with variations that build upon its foundational elements. Each surah's portrayal of the story resonates with its unique context, theme, and purpose within the Qur'ān, contributing to a comprehensive, interconnected understanding of the narrative's role and significance:

And when thy Lord said to the angels, 'I am setting in the earth a viceroy', they said, 'What, wilt Thou set therein one who will do corruption there, and shed blood, while we proclaim Thy praise and call Thee Holy?' He said, 'Assuredly I know that you know not' (30). And He taught Adam the names, all of them; then He presented them unto the angels and said, 'Now tell Me the names of these, if you speak truly'. (31) They said, 'Glory be to Thee! We know not save what Thou hast taught us. Surely Thou art the All-knowing, the All-wise' (32). He said, 'Adam, tell them their names.' And when he had told them their names He said, 'Did I not say to you, "Surely I know the unseen things of the heavens and

earth, and I know what things you reveal, and what you were hiding?"' (33)" (Arberry's Translation).

These three verses contain several primary and secondary events. If we consider an event to be a change in state or position along the timeline, or the display of a physical or mental activity that occurs as a physical phenomenon in time, carried out by an agent (human or non-human) or affecting an agent, or as a state of thought, feeling, or contemplation extended over time, we can list the physical or mental events in these three verses as follows:

1. The Lord, as a non-human agent, speaks to the angels, who are also non-human agents.

2. The agent promises a physical action.

3. The promise of appointing a vicegerent on Earth.

4. The angels respond.

5. The angels glorify God.

6. The angels sanctify God.

7. God comments (a mental action: 'I know what you do not know').

Here, God is the agent or actor, while the angels are the recipients of the action, and they play the roles of two main characters, although God can also be viewed as the narrative voice. These two characters can perform various types of actions: physical non-verbal actions, speech acts, mental reflections, emotional responses, perceptions, and sentiments. We can structure these events into a sequence or sub-sequence and express them in summarized form as a phrase or sentence. For example, these interactions between God and the angels can be encapsulated in an event-label as a phrase like *"The declaration of Adam's creation and the angels' objection"*, or as a complete sentence: *"God announces the creation of Adam, and the angels object"* or *"The creation of Adam is announced, and the angels object."*

These sub-sequences combine to form macro-sequences. Similarly, macro-sequences combine in various ways to create a cohesive narrative text. Based on this approach, we will first attempt to identify the micro-sequences of the creation story according to the order of surahs in the Qur'an, that is, as they appear in the surahs:

a) Micro-sequence of the announcement of Adam's creation and the angels' objection: Baqarah (2:30–33).

b) Micro-sequence of Adam's creation: Al-Imran (3:59); Nisa (4:1); A'raf (7:189); Isra (17:61); Zumar (39:6).

c) Micro-sequence of the angels' prostration to Adam: Baqarah (2:35); A'raf (7:11); Isra (17:61); Kahf (18:50); Ta-Ha (20:116).

d) Micro-sequence of God's command to Iblis to prostrate to Adam, and his refusal: Saad (38:71–72); Hijr (15:28–29); A'raf (7:11); Isra (17:61); Ta-Ha (20:116); Baqarah (2:34); Kahf (18:50); Hijr (15:30–31); Saad (38:73–74).

e) Micro-sequence of God's question about Iblis's pride and his response: Saad (38:75); A'raf (7:12); Hijr (15:32); Saad (38:76); Hijr (15:33); Isra (17:62).

f) Micro-sequence of God's response: Isra (17:63); A'raf (7:13, 18); Saad (38:77–78); Hijr (15:34–35).

g) Micro-sequence of Iblis's final request to God: Hijr (15:36); Saad (38:79); A'raf (7:14); Hijr (15:37–38); Saad (38:80–81); A'raf (7:15); Isra (17:62).

h) Micro-sequence of Iblis's response and insistence on misleading humans (Adam's progeny): Saad (38:82–83); Hijr (15:39–40); A'raf (7:16–17); Isra (17:62).

i) Micro-sequence of God's response: Isra (17:63–65); Saad (38:84–85).

j) Micro-sequence of God's conclusion and warning to humans: Ya-Sin (36:60).

k) Micro-sequence of Eve: Baqarah (2:35–38); Nisa (4:1); A'raf (7:19–25, 189–192); Ta-Ha (20:117).

l) Micro-sequence of Adam and Eve: A'raf (7:22–27); Ta-Ha (20:121–123); A'raf (7:189).

m) Micro-sequence of Adam's entry into Paradise: Baqarah (2:35); A'raf (7:19); Ta-Ha (20:117–119).

n) Micro-sequence of Satan's temptation and Adam's deception: Ta-Ha (20:120); A'raf (7:20–22); Ta-Ha (20:115, 121); Baqarah (2:37); A'raf (7:23); Ta-Ha (20:122).

o) Micro-sequence of the descent (Adam's fall): Baqarah (2:36); A'raf (7:24–25); Baqarah (2:38); Ta-Ha (20:123–124); A'raf (7:27).

With a closer look at these micro-sequences, we can identify several macro-sequences within them. Next, we will attempt to organize these micro-sequences into macro-sequences

3.3.5. the Micro-Sequences of the Creation Story

Overall, the story of Adam in these surahs takes on a different narrative form based on the presence or absence of one or more functions. In fact, in these surahs, we encounter diverse expressions of a single story: the story of Adam. Thus, this historical sequence can be divided into four main micro-sequences:

1. Micro-sequence of Adam's creation
2. Micro-sequence of the angels' prostration and Iblis's arrogance
3. Micro-sequence of dwelling in Paradise
4. Micro-sequence of the descent (fall)

The question then arises: on what basis are these events and micro-sequences combined? It is evident that the element of time, i.e., the chronological sequence of events, which is predominant in the story of Adam in the "Book of Genesis," is not a prominent feature in the

Qur'anic version. When we compare other Qur'anic narratives with those of the Old Testament, we find that the element of time is one of the distinguishing features of Qur'anic stories from those of the Old Testament.

The second principle of structure is causality, or the logic of cause and effect. A closer look reveals that the story of Adam in the Qur'an—from his creation, the angels' prostration, Iblis's arrogance and expulsion, Iblis's request for respite, Adam and his wife's dwelling in Paradise, their temptation by Iblis, and finally Adam's descent—is all based on causality.

The third principle is spatial connection. Here as well, the workshop of creation, Paradise, and ultimately the descent to earth act as unifying factors for the events and micro-sequences. Moreover, the verses concerning Adam's story have spatial and causal links with the verses before and after them in various surahs.

The fourth principle of event combination is character. This is more pronounced and effective in Qur'anic stories compared to the Old Testament. In Qur'anic stories, including the story of Adam, we encounter three main characters: God, Adam (and Eve), and Iblis. The major events and micro-sequences are combined based on the oppositional relationships among these three characters.

Based on these structural principles, we can outline some of the main events within these micro-sequences, scattered across different surahs, as follows:

A) Micro-Sequence of Adam's Creation

1. God informs the angels that He will appoint Adam as His representative on earth (Al-Baqarah 2:30; Sa'd 38:71-72).

2. Adam is prepared for his role as a representative (Al-Baqarah 2:31-33).

B) Micro-Sequence of the Angels' Prostration and Iblis

1. The angels prostrate, but Iblis refuses (Sa'd 38:73-76; Al-A'raf 7:11-12; Ta-Ha 20:116; Al-Isra 17:61; Al-Hijr 15:29-33; Al-Baqarah 2:34).

2. Iblis is cast out from the Divine Presence (Sa'd 38:77-78; Al-A'raf 7:13; Al-Hijr 15:34-35).

3. Iblis asks God for respite until the Day of Judgment, and God grants it (Sa'd 38:79-83; Al-A'raf 7:14-17; Al-Isra 17:62; Al-Hijr 15:36-38).

4. God promises punishment for Iblis and his followers (Al-A'raf 7:18; Sa'd 38:84-85; Al-Isra 17:63; Al-Hijr 15:39-44).

5. God reveals the ways Iblis can lead astray and assures the protection of His devoted servants (Al-Isra 17:64-65).

C) Micro-Sequence of Dwelling in Paradise

1. Adam and his wife dwell in Paradise and are forbidden from approaching a specific tree (Al-Baqarah 2:35; Al-A'raf 7:19).

2. Satan deceives them (Al-Baqarah 2:36; Al-A'raf 7:20-22).

3. They repent (Al-Baqarah 2:37).

4. Adam and his wife recognize their mistake and seek forgiveness (Al-A'raf 7:22-23; Ta-Ha 20:121-122).

D) Micro-Sequence of the Descent

1. They are sent down to earth (Al-Baqarah 2:38-39; Al-A'raf 7:24; Ta-Ha 20:123-126).

What we have presented here is a simplified version of the core events in Adam's story, as mentioned in the Qur'anic surahs. There are, of course, additional minor events or even some core events that we have not covered here, but we will set aside this hierarchical distinction for now.

3.3.6. Composition of Events in the Creation Story

The main question, which pertains to the analysis of the narrative deep structure, is to which macro-sequences or overarching patterns these micro-sequences lead. In the creation story, it seems that if we are to follow Todorov's model, there are three main stages: progression, disorder, and progression again, or, in other words, balance, imbalance, and re-balance. It appears that disorder, chaos, and corruption reign on earth. God informs the angels that He intends to create a being and appoint him as His vicegerent on earth. Thus, the creation of Adam is associated with obedience, peace, order, balance, and, ultimately, life in the fullest sense of the word. Creation takes place despite the angels' objections. God teaches Adam the divine names and instructs him to perform the act of naming. The angels, at God's command, prostrate before Adam, except for Iblis, who was initially among the angels but loses his status due to arrogance. Iblis is expelled from the divine presence, though he is granted respite to seek revenge on God. The first signs of changing equilibrium emerge. Adam and his wife settle in Paradise and are instructed not to approach the tree in the middle of the garden. Iblis, waiting for an opportunity, steps forward and deceives Adam and his wife. The stage of imbalance begins: obedience is abandoned, peace is disrupted, chaos ensues, and, ultimately, life transforms into its contradiction—'non-life' (according to Greimas' model). This 'non-life' is aligned with death, annihilation, and descent. However, in the end, though not immediately, God promises that Adam and his descendants will be granted mercy if they do not follow Iblis's footsteps. Thus, Adam's toil and suffering on earth ultimately conclude with his return to God in a state of forgiveness, and the stage of re-balance begins.

Moreover, Qur'ānic teachings, especially the five fundamental principles of faith—monotheism, prophecy, resurrection, justice, and leadership—also emphasize this general structure of balance, imbalance, and re-balance. If we examine the Qur'ānic stories embedded in the chapters, we realize that these narratives align and integrate with the chapter's themes or main purposes. For example, given that the theme of warning against Satan is one of the main themes of Surahs Al-Isra, Al-Kahf, Maryam, and Ta-Ha, it is natural that the warning to Adam against Satan and his steps is mentioned in these surahs. The admonition against Satan is part of the story of Adam (AS). In fact, it could be said that God, through the creation of Adam, underscores the principle of His oneness and sends prophets to guide Adam and his descendants. Iblis and his followers oppose the prophets and the righteous, but according to the principle of justice, victory belongs to the righteous, and

ultimately, Adam returns to God (the principle of resurrection). Thus, the core of Adam's story, which also applies to other narratives (such as those of Noah, Moses, the Cave, Jonah, and others), can be summarized in three key themes: the call to worship, the rejection of the call and arrogance, and the salvation of believers and destruction of disbelievers.

After examining the creation story based on the order of revelation and historical sequence in both surface and deep narrative structure at the micro and macro levels, one essential topic remains—the inter-surah and inter-narrative relationships among the chapters. Due to limited space and the vastness of the topic, we will restrict this discussion to Surahs Sa'd and Al-Hijr. The fundamental perspective here is that in these seven accounts of the creation story, we encounter seven narrative styles of a single story, with some fixed and variable elements. In Islamic rhetoric studies, these recurring elements in different accounts of a single story are also referred to as "tasreef in expression/Tasreef-al-Bayan".

In Surah Sa'd, the account of Adam's creation, the angels' prostration, Iblis's refusal, and his request for respite are presented. In Surah Al-A'raf, in addition to these elements, the new functions of Iblis's expulsion, Adam and his wife's residence in Paradise, their deception, repentance, and descent are mentioned. In this surah, the enmity between Iblis and Adam is introduced for the first time. This function begins with Iblis's refusal to prostrate to Adam and reaches its climax with Adam's descent to earth. In Surah Ta-Ha, some previous functions from Surahs Sa'd and Al-A'raf are reiterated with new expressions, but a new function also appears: Adam is made aware of Iblis's enmity. Although Adam knows that Iblis did not prostrate to him and indeed disobeyed God, losing his angelic rank as a result, he disregards this warning, which ultimately leads to his descent. In Surah Al-Isra, beyond reiterating previous functions, the cause of Iblis's resentment and animosity toward Adam is revealed—it is the honor and esteem that God has granted Adam. Furthermore, in this surah, another aspect of Iblis's hostility emerges: his eternal hatred for Adam's descendants. Alongside the repetition of certain functions, the method and manner of Adam's and Iblis's creation are also highlighted. Again, Iblis asks for respite from God; God grants it but assures that He will protect His servants. In Surah Al-Baqarah, the previous functions are conveyed in a fresh and distinct style.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of the narrative deep structure in Qur'ānic stories reveals recurring patterns that align with Todorov's model of progress, disturbance, and resolution (or equilibrium, disequilibrium, and restored equilibrium). In the creation story, the initial state of chaos and corruption on earth transitions to order, peace, and life through Adam's creation as God's representative. This equilibrium is disrupted by Iblis's rebellion and Adam and his wife's disobedience, introducing chaos, death, and hardship. However, through divine mercy and guidance, a new equilibrium is promised, culminating in Adam's eventual return to God's favor. This structure not only underscores Adam's transformative journey but also mirrors universal themes of human struggle and redemption.

On a broader scale, Qur'ānic principles—such as tawhid (divine oneness), prophethood, resurrection, justice, and leadership—align with this narrative framework. For example, Adam's story illustrates tawhid through his creation and guidance by God, justice through the opposition between Iblis and the prophets, and resurrection in Adam's ultimate return to God. Similarly, Qur'ānic narratives across various surahs, including Al-Isra, Al-Kahf, Maryam, and Ta-Ha, incorporate these principles, reinforcing core themes like the warning against Satan and the importance of adhering to divine guidance.

The universal applicability of this structure is evident in other Qur'ānic stories, such as those of Noah, Moses, Jonah, and the Companions of the Cave. These narratives follow a similar pattern: the call to worship, resistance and arrogance from the disbelievers, and eventual salvation for the faithful. By framing these stories within a consistent narrative structure, the Qur'ān not only effectively conveys its teachings but also emphasizes the cyclical nature of human experience—progressing from equilibrium to disruption and ultimately, divine restoration. This analysis highlights how Qur'ānic stories encapsulate profound theological principles through a universal narrative grammar, offering a lens to understand the Qur'ān's enduring relevance and its appeal to both spiritual and intellectual inquiry.

References

Al-Jaberi, M. A. (2020). *A methodical approach to the Holy Qur'ān in defining the Qur'ān* (M. Armin, Trans., 4th ed.). Ney Publishing.

Al-Jaberi, M. A. (2021). *Understanding the Qur'ān: Tafsir of the Qur'ānic surahs based on the order of revelation* (M. Armin, Trans., Vols. 1–3). Ney Publishing.

Adl, S. A. (2009). *Hieroglyph dar Qur'ān: Tafsiri novin az horoof-e moqatta'e* [Hieroglyph in the Qur'ān: A new interpretation of the disconnected letters] (H. Sedghi & H. Abbasi, Trans.). Sokhan. [In Persian].

Alter, R., & Kermode, F. (1978). *The literary guide to the Bible*. Belknap Press.

Bar-Efrat, S. (1997). *Narrative art in the Bible*. Sheffield Academic Press.

Barthes, R. (1966). *Introduction a l'analyse structurale des récits*, *Communications*, 8, 1–27. In English, (1977). *Introduction to the structural analysis of narratives*, in *Image-Music-Text* (pp. 79–124). Fontana.

Bremond, C. (1977). The morphology of the French fairy tale. In H. Jason & D. Segal (Eds.), *Pattern in oral literature* (pp. 93–110). Mouton.

Chatman, S. (1987). *Story and discourse: Narrative structure in fiction and film*. Cornell University Press.

Greimas, A. J. (1971). Narrative grammar: Units and levels. *Modern Language Notes*, 86(6), 793–806.

Horri, A. (2009). Senakh-shenasi va vojuh-e tamayoz-e qesas-e Qur'āni az sayer zhanrha [Typology and distinctive aspects of Qur'ānic stories from other genres]. *Research Journal of Persian Literature*, 15, 1–28. [In Persian].

Horri, A. (2010). Molafe-ye zaman va makan-e ravayi dar qesas-e Qur'āni [The component of narrative time and space in Qur'ānic stories]. *Adab Pazhuhi*, 7, 125–141. [In Persian].

Horri, A. (2023a). Typology of speech and thought representation in the Qur'ānic stories. *Linguistic Research in the Holy Qur'ān*, 13(2), 19–30.

Horri, A. (2023b). Translating rhetorical images of the resemblance word "kān" in a selection of Persian and English translations of the Holy Qur'ān. *Rhetoric and Grammar Studies*, 13(23), 82–99. https://doi.org/10.22091/jls.2023.9100.1472

Horri, A. (2024). Grammar of narration in punishment-oriented stories (Research sample: The story of Noah, Hud, Lot, Salih, Jethro [Shu'ayb], and Moses). *Qur'ānic Researches*, 28(109), --. https://doi.org/10.22081/jqr.2023.66613.3761

Propp, V. (1928/1968). *Morphology of the folk-tale* (L. Scott, Trans.). University of Texas Press.

Todorov, T. (2000). *Structural poetics* (M. Nabavi, Trans.). Agah Publishing.

International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies

Journal homepage: http://ttais.akhs.bou.ac.ir/

An Investigation into Three Persian Translations of Gibran Khalil Gibran's *The Prophet*

Samad Mirza Suzani[1*]

1. Department of English, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran

* Corresponding author: smirzasuzani@yahoo.com

https://doi.org/10.22081/ttais.2025.70182.1039

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: 25 October 2023
Revised: 25 December 2023
Accepted: 11 March 2024

Keywords:
Inner paratext,
Labeling,
Outer paratext,
Reframing theory,
Textual choices.

ABSTRACT

This descriptive and comparative study aimed to analyze reframing strategies in the Persian translation of Gibran Khalil Gibran's The Prophet (1923). The study examined the entire book and its three Persian translations: Mostapha Elm (1961), Mahdi Maghsodi (2004), and Hossein Mohyeddin Elahi Ghomshei (2015). Reframing strategies are significant tools used by translators to adapt a text to a different context. To guide this analysis, we applied Baker's (2007) reframing theory, which includes labeling, outer paratext, inner paratext, and textual choices encompassing translational and contextual strategies. The findings revealed that among the three Persian translations of The Prophet, Elahi Ghomshei's version employs a rich array of inner and outer paratextual strategies, often Islamizing the text through frequent theological references to classic Persian poets. His translation is also more heavily commented, interpreted, and reframed compared to those of Maghsodi and Elm. Additionally, Elahi Ghomshei's translation stands out for its temporal and spatial relevance, as it connects the events to the poet's era and the original Islamic context. In contrast, while Maghsodi's and Elm's translations show few signs of such strategies, Elahi Ghomshei's work offers examples where the content of Persian poems closely aligns with the English text.

How to cite this article: Mirza Suzani, S. (2024). An Investigation into Three Persian Translations of Gibran Khalil Gibran's The Prophet. *International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies*, *2*(2), 156-171. doi:10.22081/ttais.2025.70182.1039

1. Introduction

According to Wittgenstein (2008), the limits of one's language signify the limits of one's world. Language shapes our understanding of the external reality and influences our consciousness. He further suggests that our use of language, whether spoken or written, reflects not only our knowledge of the world but also our attitudes toward it (2008). In the context of religious language, it is evident that language is deeply intertwined with underlying preconceptions about both humanity and divine beings. Additionally, variations in linguistic expression can have significant and sometimes striking effects. The translation of religious texts is particularly important, as fundamental translation theories in the Western world have often focused on these texts. Keane (1997) argues that in religious discourse, the sources of words, along with the identity, agency, authority, and even the presence of participants in an interaction, can present unique challenges.

It is essential to note that the purpose of translation has evolved over time. Newmark (1988) observed that translation was once expected to be strictly faithful, but later concepts of equivalence and equivalent effect emerged. More specifically, Melis and Albir (2001) identified three contexts for quality assessment in translation: (1) literary or religious texts, (2) professional texts, and (3) pedagogical texts.

In addition to prescriptive translation theories, scholars have proposed descriptive and evaluative models for assessing translations. Baker (2008) posits that the term (re)narration best describes translation today, as texts are often treated as tools serving dominant parties. Baker (2006) defines framing as structures of anticipation—strategic moves consciously initiated to present a narrative in a particular light. He further describes framing as "an active process of signification through which we consciously participate in the construction of reality" (p. 167).

Sociological studies illuminate the schools and movements within society; therefore, researchers analyzing translated works should pay close attention to the strategies employed to guide readers. This makes the study of literary texts and their translations particularly important, as they contribute significantly to the cultural discourse within societies. Given this context, although Gibran Khalil Gibran's works are well-received in Iranian culture, it is noteworthy that he was born into a Catholic Christian family. This study aims to examine how Gibran's seminal work, The Prophet, is reframed by Persian translators. Special emphasis will be placed on the structures and attributes that shape reader ideology through reframing strategies in the translation from English to Persian.

Specifically, this study will scrutinize how reframing strategies adopted by translators influence readers' ideologies and identify the strategies frequently employed to reframe the original text. In other words, the study seeks to reveal and analyze the methods by which translators of Gibran's selected work have reframed their translations to impact their readers. Consequently, this study aims to identify the reframing strategies used in three translations of The Prophet and determine the differences in these strategies among various translators. Based on these considerations, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: How does reframing strategies adopted by translators shape the ideology of the reader toward translations of Gibran Khalil Gibran's works?

RQ2: What strategies do translators draw on frequently in order to reframe the original text?

Since this study focuses on the concept of reframing in the translation of religious texts, it aims to contribute novel insights and findings to Translation Studies (TS). Moreover, the study offers several benefits for various language practitioners:

Verification and Expansion of Translation Theories: The findings can expand or corroborate existing translation theories, especially regarding the notion of reframing.

Cultural Translators: Cultural theorists of translation will gain insights into how religious texts are translated across different cultures.

Translation Trainers and Educators: The results and discussions presented here can significantly aid translation trainers and educators by addressing challenging questions in the field.

Interpreters of Religious Texts: Finally, the study may provide valuable contributions to interpreters of religious texts, highlighting how their work differs from that of translators.

2. Literature review

Over the past four decades, linguistics has seen rapid growth in both its theoretical and applied dimensions. As a result, some experts in the field have developed models and frameworks to study translation from a descriptive perspective. 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 highlights the importance of preserving meaning as a text expands. Additionally, the concept of "accessibility" underscores the role of prior knowledge in helping the audience understand the text. In discourse studies, this is referred to as "background knowledge" (Bell, 1991; Brown & Yule, 1983; Yule, 2006). Baker (2008) differentiated between the narrative analysis of translation and narratology, as well as linguistic analysis. She viewed narrative as the process through which translators contribute to telling a story rather than merely representing the main event. Baker (2006) defines narrative as follows:

[…] narrative is the principal and inescapable mode by which we experience the world. Narratives are the stories we tell ourselves and other people about the world(s) in which we live. These stories are constructed – not discovered – by us in the course of making sense of reality, and they guide our behavior and our interaction with others. In this sense, the terms 'narrative' and 'story' can be used interchangeably (p. 169).

Pormouzeh (2014) argued that patronage, ideology, and the discourse of power within dominant social groups shape the final outcome of translations. Consequently, an ideology that serves a particular group necessitates a narrative aligned with its interests. In this sense, ideology and narrative are deeply interconnected, influencing each other in a reciprocal relationship. Recognizing the significant role of a translator's ideology, Mirza Suzani (2024) asserted that modifications made to the source text—reflecting the constraints and norms guiding early translators—are not accidental but rather deliberate choices. These changes may stem from various factors, including the translator's personal ideological beliefs, concerns about failing to meet readers' expectations, or fear of legal repercussions for authors, translators, or publishers.

Simpson and Mayr (2010) note that the term ideology was first coined in the 1800s by French philosopher Destutt de Tracy. It is closely linked to Karl Marx's treatise The German Ideology, which has been translated into multiple languages. Furthermore, Simpson and Mayr (2010) explain that in Marx's original conception, ideology serves as a key mechanism through which dominant social forces—such as royalty, aristocracy, or the bourgeoisie—exercise power over subordinated or oppressed groups, including the industrial and rural proletariat (p. 4). In Baker's (2006) terms, framing refers to the ways in which "translators and interpreters – in collaboration with publishers, editors, and other agents involved in the interaction – accentuate, undermine or modify aspects of the narrative(s) encoded in the source text or utterance" (p. 105).

Darwish (2006) highlighted the role of television and rapid news dissemination networks in framing information. By comparing news coverage on Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, he found that while there were similarities in their reporting, each network framed the news differently. Recognizing the role of translation and interpretation in shaping meaning, Baker (2006) argued that translators and interpreters are not passive recipients of text. Like other social groups, they actively engage in the communication process and bear responsibility for the texts and utterances they produce (p. 105). Since translators are considered active participants, their mediation in the text is both acknowledged and justified.

Framing and reframing are closely related concepts derived from Baker's (2006) narrative theory, which emphasizes the role of narratives in shaping perceptions of reality and facts. According to Baker (2006), framing and reframing function similarly in translation, as translators play a crucial role in reshaping the narrative. Reframing strategies are techniques used either intentionally—to influence readers' perceptions before engaging with the text—or unconsciously, as a result of the translator's involvement in the translation process. These strategies ultimately guide readers in a specific direction. Baker (2006) identifies several reframing strategies, including:

a) Temporal and Spatial Context (Historical Moment),

b) Labeling, Titling, and Naming,

c) Outer Paratexts,

d) Inner Paratexts,

e) Inner Paratexts (Additional Notes), and

f) Textual Choices.

The present study aims to analyze how translators of Khalil Gibran's selected works have employed reframing strategies to shape readers' perceptions. Specifically, it examines three Persian translations of The Prophet (1923) by Elahi Ghomshei (1999), Elm (1962), and Maghsodi (1998). Originally written in 1923, The Prophet is a collection of 26 prose and poetry essays by Khalil Gibran, translated into more than 40 languages. The book explores 26 themes related to life and the human condition. Given this context, the study seeks to identify the reframing strategies used by the translators to shape readers' ideological interpretations of Gibran's The Prophet and to explore which strategies are most frequently employed in the three Persian translations.

3. Methodology

3.1. Materials

The corpus of this study comprises the entire content of The Prophet by Khalil Gibran (1923) and its three Persian translations. The Prophet consists of 26 prose and poetry essays exploring various aspects of life and the human condition. Originally published in 1923, the book has been translated into more than 40 languages.

The Prophet tells the story of Almustafa, who, after living in the city of Orphalese for twelve years, prepares to return to his homeland. During his time in Orphalese, he earns the deep admiration and love of the people for his wisdom and kindness. As he prepares to depart, the townspeople gather around him, unwilling to let him go, longing to keep him with them forever.

Almitra, a close friend of the Prophet, eagerly asks him about the principles of a good life. In response, the Prophet speaks about love, emphasizing the importance of commitment in truly understanding one's own heart and gaining insight into the essence of life. He asserts that those who fear love should hide and flee, while those who refuse to surrender to love will never experience true fulfillment. The Prophet then shares his wisdom on various aspects of life, including marriage, children, charity, food and drink, work, joy and sorrow, shelter, clothing, commerce, and the treatment of crime and punishment.

In this study, from among the translations of "The Prophet" (1923), three mostly read Persian renditions were selected which included translations by Mostapha Elm (1961), Mahdi Maghsodi (2004), and Hossein Mohyeddin Elahi Ghomshei (2015).

3.2. Framework of the study

The model of narrative theory and reframing strategies of Baker (2006) was the basis of analysis in this study. Different strategies of this model are as follows:

Temporal and Spatial Context (Historical Moment): comprise the search for intertextual references offered by translator inside translation to harmonize his/herself with translation. In Baker's (2006) terms, it refers to "selecting a particular text and embedding it in a temporal and spatial context that accentuates the narrative it depicts and encourages us to establish links between it and current narratives that touch our lives" (p. 112).

Labelling, Titling, and Naming: refer to the use of naming according to ideological considerations. Sometimes it occurs due to differences in ideological thinking by opposing other groups. The use of euphemism, rival system of naming, counter-naming and alignment of the changed titles with names are key conceptual elements for labelling, titling and naming.

Outer Paratexts (cover, blurb): include repositioning paratextual elements within the original book and translations. The cover books, pictures inside the books and general ideas the books may transmit are considered as outer paratexts.

Inner Paratexts: consist of such parts as Introductions/Prefaces that are produced by translators and specify the way of reading the text. Sometimes translators offer information inside the text in introductions or glossaries to offer inner paratextual ideologies.

Inner Paratexts (Additional notes): include Footnotes used as additional notes by translators in the text to show their alignment with the text or justify the ambiguous aspects of the text. Such footnotes are commonly analysed to report the notes which are innovated by the translators.

Textual Choices (within the translation): are considered as selective appreciations including deletions, additions, and censorship in the text. It also includes the choice of words and ideological preferences and similar alternatives by translator in the translation of the text involved.

3.3. Procedures

The aim of this study was to examine how translators of Khalil Gibran's The Prophet have reframed their translations to shape readers' perceptions. To achieve this, the study drew on the closely related concepts of framing and reframing from Baker's (2006) narrative theory, which explores the construction of reality and facts through narratives. Among the various Persian translations of The Prophet, three widely read versions were selected: Mostapha Elm (1961), Mahdi Maghsodi (2004), and Hossein Mohyeddin Elahi Ghomshei (2015). The analysis and discussion in this study were based on Baker's (2006) narrative theory model and reframing strategies.

The analysis was conducted across six categories. For each section, relevant excerpts from the original book and its corresponding translations were provided. The translated text was then examined for similarities, differences, and reframed elements. Drawing on all aspects of Baker's (2006) narrative theory, the factors influencing the translators' renditions were examined. Specifically, these aspects included the ideological or strategic labeling, naming, and titling of terms, as well as the book cover and blurb, the introduction and preface written by the translators, footnotes, and lexical choices. These elements ranged from the book cover to word choice and cultural considerations, all shaped by the translators' selective emphasis on key conceptual elements within the study's framework. In discussing the reframing elements, the additional information introduced in the translations was identified and analyzed according to the reframing strategies employed.

4. Findings

Using the six strategies from Baker's (2006) model to analyze The Prophet and its Persian translations, the following findings were obtained:

4.1. Temporal and spatial context

In analyzing the original book and its translations, three key factors should be considered. The original text is a narrative recounting the life of a prophet, narrated by Khalil Gibran, who lived during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The first Persian translation was done by Elahi Ghomshei in 1999. The act of narrating in three distinct temporal and spatial contexts places both the original work and the translations into new, evolving situations.

4.1.1. Elahi Ghomshei's translation

Regarding the temporal and spatial context, the following examples are considerable.

1. The sentence "It is not a garment I cast off this day, but a skin that I tear with my own hands" was translated by Elahi Ghomshei's as:

آنچه باید امروز از تن به در آورم جامه نیست بلکه پوستی است که باید با دست های خویش پاره کنم

The original sentence in English and Elahi Ghomshei's rendition in Persian remind us of Sa'di's witty poem:

شراب خورده معنی چو در سماع آید چه جای جامه که بر خویشتن بدرد پوست

This is a presupposition or intertextual representation of a concept from Sa'di's verse that sets the translation with new conditions of time and place compared to the original, producing a new concept. Therefore, the translation recreated a new temporal and spatial condition.

2. Another intervention of temporal situation is created in the text by similarizing the language of translation to the content of Hafez' poem when Gibran says "when love beckons to you follow him" which is translated by Elahi Ghomshei as " هر زمان که عشق اشارتی به شما کرد در پی او بشتابید" (p. 35). Indeed, in the rendition of this sentence, the translator refers to the following verse of Hafez:

آن دم که دل به عشق دهی خوش دمی بود درکار خیر حاجت هیچ استخاره نیست

It appears that Elahi Ghomshei has taken advantage of the domestication strategy to convey the words of Islam and Islamic instructions through witty language of the celebrated Persian poets in his renditions. Interestingly, the reader, while reading the translated text, may hardly be able to summon up that Gibran is a Christian poet.

4.1.2. Maghsodi's translation

Maghsodi translated The Prophet into Persian prose in 1997. Unlike Elahi Ghomshei's rendition, Maghsodi's translation is simple, more artistic, and rhythmic. There is little trace of temporal and spatial intertextuality in the translation, and decision making about references to the intertextual content is devolved to the readers. The reader has to understand the hidden allegories and references by doing research or contemplation in the content of the translation. In fact, in Maghsodi's translation, readers are mostly responsible for their understanding of the text and they do not perceive the text from filter of interpretation of the translator or his comments to the significant contents.

4.1.3 Elm's translation

Elm's translation, completed in 1962, predates the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The translated text maintains a clear and simple style, offering semantic translations of the sentences from The Prophet. The only noticeable addition in this version, which introduces spatial elements, is the inclusion of Gibran's paintings between the translated pages. However, these illustrations seem irrelevant to the prose content, as many of the images,

particularly those of nude women, conflict with the themes of Gibran's work. Similar to Maghsodi's translation, this version leaves readers to interpret the text on their own, encouraging contemplation. Furthermore, the illustrations do not seem to contribute any additional meaning, as they are neither analyzed nor described in relation to the text.

4.2. Labelling, titling, and naming

Baker (2006) believes that labeling is ideological and suggests that there are four types of labeling, including euphemism, rival system of naming, counter-naming, and alignment of the changed titles. There are some examples of labelling in the translations of The Prophet. In Table 1, the items used for each term are provided.

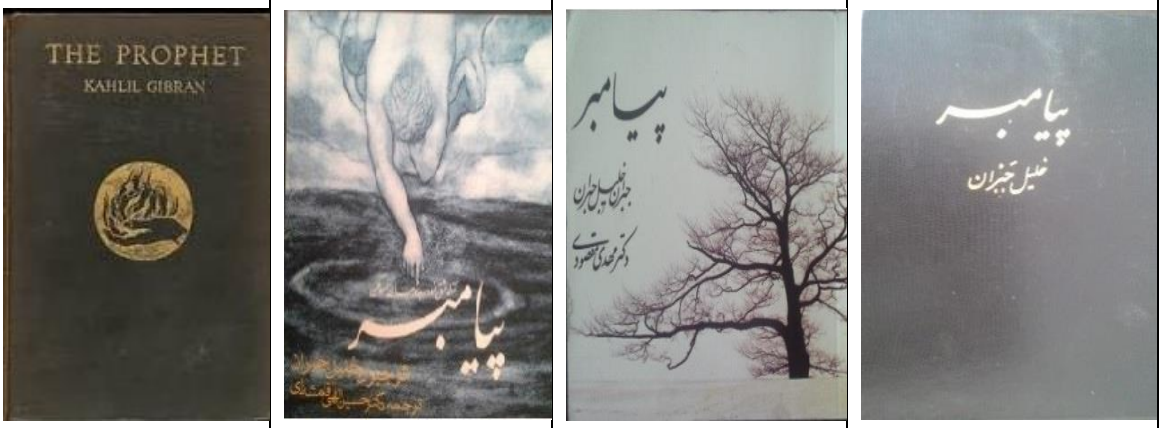
Table 1. Number of labelling, titling, and naming strategies in the translations of "The Prophet"

English term	Elahi Ghomshei's translation	Maghsodi's translation	Elm's translation
innocent	معصومان	معصومیت مقدس	بی گناهان
veil	حجاب	نقاب	رو بند
farewell	وداع	بدرود	خدانگهدار
wine	شراب	شراب	می

In Elahi Ghomshei's translation, the euphemism strategy is seen abundantly and the rendition has become more domesticated in the Persian language. For instance, the term "حجاب" in Elahi Ghomshei's translation is euphemistically used and labelled for veil and appears to shows the meaning of the term well. The other two translations are not labeled. Also, in the last example, as both bread and wine are considered divine gifted foods in the Christian culture, the term "شراب" is likely to better represent the meaning than the term "می" used in Elm rendition. Indeed, using the term "می" by Elm is an instance of counter-naming. As shown in Table 1, the labeled terms by translators include some instances of euphemism suggested by Elahi Ghomshei and an instance of counter-naming by Elm. Since the book is a religious one and is welcomed by Iranian and Muslims' religious culture because of its proper content, there is no more instances of counter-naming, rival system of naming, and alignment of titles.

4.3. Outer paratexts

Considering the strategies of Baker's (2006) framework, paratext comprises additional information by translators, editors, publishers and so on. Also, the outer paratext refers to the book cover and blurb. In none of the translated books there were blurbs, and hence they are disregarded. However, regarding the covers of the original and translated books the following points are noteworthy.



#1	#2	#3	#4

Figure 1. Book covers of Gibran's "The Prophet", First Edition (1923) (#1) and its three Persian translations by Elahi Ghomshei (#2), Maghsodi (#3), and Elm (#4)

4.3.1. Gibran Kahlil's book cover

The original English version of the book features a painting by Gibran himself. Since the book was first published during his lifetime, it is likely that the design of the cover was intentional. At first glance, the image appears to be a hand with flames or blazes of fire. However, upon closer inspection, one might interpret it as the hand of a person in prayer. Even more clearly, figures of angels or people rising from the open hand become visible. It seems that Gibran deliberately chose this image for the book cover to convey a thematic ideology. The image suggests the concept of praying hands seeking elevation toward heaven, with the upward movement of the figures symbolizing a spiritual ascent. The open hands appear to direct or orient the source of guidance.

4.3.2. Elahi Ghomshei's book cover

The book cover of Elahi Ghomshei's translation also features a painting by Gibran Khalil, though it is cropped on the cover. At first glance, the painting is unclear, and it appears to show a person lying on a beach and touching the water. Upon further examination, however, the meaning behind the image becomes more apparent. The painting depicts a person looking downward and touching the water, with ripples spreading outward. The image symbolizes how, through divine inspiration, we can influence the world—starting from a single point and, like a ripple, spreading outward. Good deeds, humanity, and righteousness are akin to touching water, with everyone benefiting from such actions.

The figure on the cover is partially obscured due to nudity, yet both the cover designer and the translator seem to have intended to preserve the original essence of the image. A line by the poet Hafiz, "نقطه عشق نمودم به تو هان سهو مکن" ("I have shown you the point of love; do not make a mistake"), is inscribed on the cover, linking the image to Hafiz's ideology. The author of The Prophet suggests that humans are born without clothing, and that garments are human-made, not divinely given. In this context, the censorship of the nude figure on the translated cover reflects social attitudes toward censorship, which may influence how readers interpret the content, rather than encouraging independent reflection. This approach to translation can be viewed not as a description but as a prescription, guiding readers to interpret the book through the translator's ideological lens.

4.3.3. Maghsodi's book cover

The cover of Maghsodi's translation was designed by Siavash Maghsodi. The image of a leafless tree on this cover is markedly different from the original cover of the English version. This picture appears to have been chosen without a clear purpose or ideological intention, offering minimal insight into the content of the book. It neither guides the reader's interpretation nor aligns with the themes of the text. In fact, its apparent irrelevance could even paradoxically mislead readers, suggesting a disconnect from the original message.

4.3.4. Elm's book cover.

The book cover is black, simple, and somber, displaying only the title and the author's name. There are no images or illustrations, resulting in a cover that offers little thematic or symbolic insight.

4.4. Inner paratexts

Inner paratexts refer to sections such as introductions, prefaces, and glossaries, which are often included to provide additional information or critical commentary on the text. By offering clarifications or interpretations, these inner paratexts can shape readers' perceptions and influence their ideology toward the text. This ideological framing is often guided by the translator, editor, or even the publisher.

4.4.1. Elahi Ghomshei's translation

The book begins with a miniature and a celebrated verse by Ferdowsi, which reads:

به نام خداوند جان و خرد کزین برتر اندیشه بر نگذرد

The book begins with a miniature and a celebrated verse by Ferdowsi, followed by a preface on the next page. The introduction provides details about the author's birth, birthplace, parents, teachers, and close friends who influenced him. It also mentions that the author moved to the USA at the age of 12. The translator includes three of Gibran's paintings in the preface, followed by a chronological sequence of Gibran's life and works. The introduction notes that the content of The Prophet bears similarities to Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra in terms of its storytelling. It also highlights that Gibran was inspired by Persian poets, Sufis, and Christian saints like William Blake. Subsequently, the translator provides summaries for each of the 28 chapters, accompanied by short descriptions for each title, along with poetic reflections from figures like Hafez, Rumi, and others. At the end of the preface, the translator discusses Gibran's other works and offers acknowledgments, thanking those who assisted in comparing the translation to the original text. The inclusion of numerous paintings, pictures, and quotes from Persian poets makes the book feel less like a mere translation and more like a domestic work crafted by the translator himself, rather than Gibran.

4.4.2. Maghsodi's translation

Maghsodi includes two inner paratexts: at the beginning of the book, he presents "گفتاری از مترجم" ("A Speech by the Translator"), and at the end, a section titled "از خلیل جبران" ("From Kahlil Gibran"). In his introduction, the translator describes the original book as a

remarkable work that he chose to translate. He notes that the text is simple and filled with biblical influences, rather than Qur'anic allusions or references to Hafiz's poetry. By providing this introduction, Maghsodi indicates that he selected the book for its specific content, and he emphasizes that he focused on preserving the sense and meaning of the original work rather than being strictly faithful to its form. His goal was to maintain Gibran's thoughts and viewpoints. However, the translator does not explicitly mention any intent to influence the reader, aside from the observation that Gibran was inspired by biblical sources and religious interpretations. At the end of the book, Maghsodi offers additional details about Gibran's birthplace, upbringing, conflicts, and his move to the USA, along with a chronology of his life and works. Many of the details provided here are similar to those found in the introductory section of Elahi Ghomshei's translation.

4.4.3. Elm's translation.

Elm's translation begins with a series of significant speeches by Gibran, emphasizing that while things may seem unclear at first, they will become clear in the end. The book opens with a preface that seeks to portray Gibran as a brilliant and idealistic figure deeply connected to the divine. The preface focuses on his timeline and life, detailing his time in Beirut, his move to the USA, his return to study Arabic literature, his time in France to study painting, and his creative endeavors. It also introduces his works in both Arabic and English, as well as his contributions to English-language newspapers. The translator states that he has made every effort to stay true to the source text, avoiding any changes during the translation process, and has aimed to preserve the writer's style. While no further clarifications or notes are provided, the preface offers a comprehensive biographical account of Kahlil Gibran's life and works.

4.5. Inner paratexts (Additional notes)

Footnotes, as additional notes, are another type of paratext used by translators to clarify the meaning of difficult texts or provide supplementary explanations. Below, the use of footnotes in the three translations is examined.

4.5.1. Elahi Ghomshei's translation

Elahi Ghomshei's translation includes four types of footnotes:

1. When the content of a statement aligns with the message of a Persian poem, the translator provides the relevant Persian verse. This type of footnote appears on nearly every page. For example, consider the content of the following statement in Persian:

شما از زمان جویباری نقش می‌کنید و سپس بر لب جوی می‌نشینید و در گذر لب می‌نگرید

For the above statement, the translator uses a similar theme from Hafez's poem, which is as follows:

بنشین بر لب جوی و گذر عمر ببین کاین اشارت زجهان گذران ما را بس

Similarly, poems by Rumi, Sa'di, Hafez, Kharaghani, Nezami, as well as verses from the Holy Qur'an, are also used in other instances.

2. At the beginning of each chapter, there is a quote in the form of a poem by Persian poets that relates thematically to the content of the chapter. These poems address the subject matter of the chapter. For example, in the section on "love," the translator includes a poem by Hafez, which expresses the idea that:

طفیل هستی عشقند آدمی و پری ارادتی بنما تا سعادتی ببری

4.5.2. Maghsodi's translation

There are no footnotes in Maghsodi's translation, meaning that readers, critics, and researchers are responsible for interpreting the texts on their own.

4.5.3. Elm's translation

Like Maghsodi's translation, Elm's translation also contains no footnotes, requiring readers to interpret the text on their own.

4.6. Textual Choices

Textual choices refer to the strategies used by translators to reframe a translation by highlighting certain parts or terms. These strategies include deletion, addition, and censorship. Based on these principles, the elements of deletion, addition, and censorship were analyzed in the translations of The Prophet. The results are as follows:

4.6.1. Elahi Ghomshei's translation

The content, sentences, and words are the textual choices examined in the translations. The use of deletion, addition, and censorship was analyzed and discussed whenever relevant indicators appeared in the texts. To illustrate, let's consider the following statement and its translation by Elahi Ghomshei:

when you kill a beast, say to him in your heart…

وقتی حیوانی را ذبح می کنی در دل با او بگو...

The term "kill" generally refers to the act of slaughtering an animal for food. In contrast, the term "ذبح" (zabah) is specifically an Islamic term used for slaughtering an animal under certain religious conditions, which involves saying prayers, facing the animal toward Mecca, and then cutting its throat. In the example above, it is culturally inappropriate to equate the act of killing animals in the general sense of the English source text with the specific and intentional Persian term used by Elahi Ghomshei. The main reason for this difference is that an additional strategy was employed in the translation.

4.6.2. Maghsodi's translation

There are no instances of textual choices in Maghsodi's translation, as he appears to be fully faithful to both the form and content of the source text. As a result, readers, critics, and researchers are responsible for interpreting the text on their own.

4.6.3. Elm's translation

Similar to Maghsodi's translation, there are no instances of textual choices, as the translator appears to be completely faithful to both the form and content of the source text.

5. Discussion

Out of the many books written by Khalil Gibran, several were originally written in English, some of which have been translated into Persian, though these may not be readily accessible in Iran. In this study, The Prophet in English, along with its three Persian translations, were analyzed using reframing strategies. The adaptation strategies, incorporating reframing techniques in each translator's work, were discussed, and the ways in which they reframed and shaped the readers' ideology were summarized for each strategy and for each translator's translation. Regarding the reframing strategies adopted by the translators to influence the readers' perception of the book, it was found that Elahi Ghomshei's Persian translation of The Prophet is more extensively commented on, interpreted, and reframed compared to the translations by Maghsodi and Elm. Specifically, in terms of temporal and spatial aspects, Elahi Ghomshei's translation stands out, as it references events occurring in the time of poets such as Hafiz and Molana, relating the original content to Islamic themes. It also provides examples where the content of Persian poetry and the English text align. Few such indications of this strategy are present in Maghsodi and Elm's translations.

In the case of labeling, five instances were reported, with Elahi Ghomshei using euphemism in four of these cases, and Elm employing counter-naming in one instance during their translations. Regarding the outer paratext, Elahi Ghomshei's book cover is more relevant to the content of the book, although the removal of part of the cover image makes it harder to fully grasp the meaning of the painting. In contrast, Elm's book cover is simple, while Maghsodi's cover is entirely unrelated to the content. The inner paratext, which includes introductions and prefaces, is present in all three translations but with varying degrees of detail. Elm and Maghsodi provide only biographical and chronological information about the author, whereas Elahi Ghomshei incorporates numerous commentaries, claims, and quotations from Persian poets to support, discuss, and interpret the content before translating the main text. This approach enhances the framing role of Elahi Ghomshei's translation, influencing readers' interpretations.

Regarding the use of footnotes, Elahi Ghomshei's translation is rich in footnotes and related explanations that align with the content of each paragraph. In contrast, Elm's and Maghsodi's translations contain no footnotes whatsoever. Finally, textual choices refer to the selection of specific elements in the translation that distinguish one version from another. In Elahi Ghomshei's translation of The Prophet, two examples of textual choices were identified, both of which reflect Islamic beliefs. Specifically, the term 'ذبح' is used instead of 'kill', and the term 'نفس' is deliberately added to enhance clarity. However, no such textual choices are present in Maghsodi's or Elm's translations.

Considering the strategies frequently applied by translators to reframe the original text, it was revealed that Elahi Ghomshei's Persian translation of The Prophet reinterprets the text more extensively than the renditions by the other two translators. In this process, strategies such as temporal and spatial framing, labeling, outer paratext, inner paratext, and textual choices are incorporated to reframe the original content. Furthermore, Elahi Ghomshei's

translation aligns more closely with Persian literary trends, drawing on Qur'anic themes, Sufism, and sacred writings, in contrast to the original Christian author's biblical content. Regarding the translation of love letters, while no significant changes are observed in the inner paratext, the outer paratext is often reframed. In other words, none of the translators make major alterations to the text, and their use of strategies is generally limited to inner paratext, textual choices, and outer paratext.

This study resonates with existing literature on narrative analysis, particularly concerning the observation of renarration and reframing through narrative and framing strategies. While previous research shares these general findings, the specific approach and scope of this study represent a novel contribution to the field. This is illustrated by examples cited in Baker (2006), which provide a foundation for this analysis. For instance, the Arabic translation of Huntington's The Clash of Civilizations demonstrates reframing through the use of inner paratext, specifically introductions and footnotes. Baker (2006) argues that while Huntington posits conditions for civilizational conflict in the 21st century, the Arabic commentary and introductory material aim to moderate this concept of inevitable conflict, effectively 'purifying' the original text.

6. Conclusion

Translation involves much more than simply finding target-language equivalents for source-language words and phrases; it also encompasses the roles that translation plays within society (Robinson, 2003). When considering ideology in translation, many scholars examine the influence of the translator's ideology and attitudes on their work. In this regard, Hatim and Mason (1997, p. 144) define ideology as "the tacit assumptions, beliefs, and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups". This definition is particularly relevant to the focus of this study, as translators of sacred texts must be acutely aware of the unique characteristics and issues associated with such translations. While translating various types of texts carries its own significance, translating holy texts is even more delicate and significant, as these texts address ideologies and belief systems. Moreover, most translators of sacred scriptures generally aim to preserve the original content of the source language, seeking to remain faithful to its original context.

Based on Baker's (2007) framing theory, framing strategies create conditions that transform the translated text into an adaptation. These strategies align the target text with the original text. In this study, The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran (1923) and its three Persian translations by Mostapha Elm (1961), Mahdi Maghsodi (2004), and Hossein Mohyeddin Elahi Ghomshei (2015) are analyzed through the lens of Baker's (2006) narrative theory, particularly focusing on framing strategies. The first research question explores how adaptation occurs through reframing the translation, while the second examines the strategies that the translators frequently employ to reframe the original text.

Among the three translations, Elahi Ghomshei's rendition has been reframed more extensively than the other two. The reasons for this substantial reframing lie in the application of a variety of reframing strategies. Elahi Ghomshei's translation includes more comments, interpretations, and reframing techniques compared to those of Maghsodi and Elm. According to Baker's (2007) classification of reframing strategies, both temporal (time) and spatial (place) contexts, which are presupposed in the writer's mind, may be incorporated into the source text as part of an intertextual phenomenon. Additionally, during the translation process, a sentence, quote, or anecdote might remind the translator of a past

scene or event, prompting them to retell the source text with elements or meanings associated with that imagined event.

Regarding the temporal and spatial aspects, similarities are found between Elahi Ghomshei's translation and the lines of Hafiz and Rumi's poems, as well as Islamic teachings. This suggests that his translation has been reframed. On the other hand, no evidence of such strategies is found in Maghsodi's and Elm's translations. Additionally, five examples of labeling have been observed, with four instances belonging to Elahi Ghomshei's translation, where euphemism is used. In contrast, only one instance is found in Elm's translation, where counter-naming is employed. The book cover of Elahi Ghomshei's translation is more relevant than those of the other two translators, but the removal of part of the picture reduces the overall clarity. In contrast, the book covers of the other two translators seem to be less relevant to the content.

The application of introductions and prefaces in the three translations is also notable. However, Elm and Maghsodi provide only biographical details about the author, while Ghomshei includes numerous commentaries and quotes from Persian poets to discuss and interpret the content of the book. Additionally, Elahi Ghomshei's translation includes many footnotes, whereas Elm and Maghsodi include very few. Examples of textual choices are also found in Elahi Ghomshei's translation, while there are almost no instances of such choices in the translations by Maghsodi and Elm, as they remained entirely faithful to the form and content of the source text. Studies such as the current one may be valuable for those interested in further research on the translation of sacred texts, helping them select appropriate strategies for handling cultural elements from the source text. This approach could enable translators to make better-informed decisions and produce more effective translations of religious texts in the future. The results of this study also offer valuable insights for translation trainers and educators, as it addresses a complex issue. Furthermore, it can contribute to the work of religious text interpreters by illustrating how their tasks may differ from those of translators.

Considering the findings of this study, further research on other religious texts is needed to obtain complementary results. This will allow for the application of insights gained from this work to similar studies and contribute to the production of more accurate and thoughtful translations of religious content in the future. It should be noted that the present study focused solely on three translations from English to Persian. Had the researcher had more time and fewer restrictions, additional Persian translations could have been analyzed. In this regard, future researchers may explore other language pairs as well. Additionally, researchers can approach the topic from various perspectives and scopes, examining different aspects in their studies. There is also potential for in-depth research on other universally recognized figures, personalities, and widely-known works. Furthermore, studies could be conducted on other variables such as the translator's gender, as well as their religious, (socio)cultural, and ideological background. Finally, researchers may choose to explore different genres and fields in future studies.

In conclusion, working with religious texts that address people's faith and beliefs requires careful attention and precision, as well as the implementation of a comprehensive and broad framework. In other words, the researcher must thoroughly understand all terms and concepts in the source text before analyzing them in the target language(s). This meticulous approach is essential to ensure the best possible outcomes in the study.

References

Baker, M. (2006). *Translation and conflict: A narrative account*. Routledge.

Baker, M. (2007). Reframing conflict in translation. *Social Semiotics, 24*(1), 14–19.

Baker, M. (2008). Ethics of re-narration: Baker is interviewed by Andrew Chesterman. *Cultus, 1*(1), 10–33.

Baldo, M. (2008). *Translation as re-narration in Italian-Canadian writing: Codeswitching, focalisation, voice and plot in Nino Ricci's trilogy and its Italian translation* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Manchester].

Bell, R. T. (1991). *Translation and translating: Theory and practice*. Longman.

Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge University Press.

Darwish, A. (2006). Translating the news reframing constructed realities. *Translation Watch Quarterly, 2*(1), 52–77.

Elahi Ghomshei, H. (1999). *The Prophet* (Translation) [In Persian]. Rozaneh Publications.

Elm, M. (1962). *The Prophet* (Translation) [In Persian]. Taban Publications.

Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (1997). *The translator as communicator*. Routledge.

Keane, W. (1997). Religious language. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 26*, 47–71. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.26.1.47

Maghsodi, M. (1962). *The Prophet* (Translation) [In Persian]. Bidgol Publications.

Melis, N. M., & Albir, A. H. (2001). Assessment in Translation Studies: Research needs. *Meta, 46*(2), 272–287. https://doi.org/10.7202/004605ar

Mirza Suzani, S. (2024). Translation of culturally sensitive concepts in literary texts from the perspective of critical discourse analysis and descriptive-explanatory translation studies. *Application of Language Studies, 2*(1), 128–151.

Newmark, P. (1988). *Approaches to translation*. Prentice Hall.

Pormouzeh, A. (2014). Translation as re-narration: Critical analysis of Iran's cultural and political news in English western media and press from 2000 to 2012. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5*(9), 608–619.

Robinson, D. (2003). *Becoming a translator* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Simpson, P., & Mayr, A. (2010). *Language and power: A resource book for students*. Routledge.

Wittgenstein in Cambridge: Letters and documents 1911-1951. (2008). (B. McGuinness, Ed.). Blackwell.

Yule, G. (2006). *The study of language* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies

Journal homepage: http://ttais.akhs.bou.ac.ir/

An Examination of Lexical Coherence in Three English Translations of Complementary Oppositions in Surah Al-An'aam

Maliheh Taghavi Baghban[1], Mohammad Yazdani[1*], Omid Akbari[1]

1. Department of English Language, Imam Reza International University, Mashhad, Iran

* Corresponding author: mohammadyazdaniets@gmail.com

https://doi.org/10.22081/ttais.2025.70251.1043

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: 11 November 2023
Revised: 9 February 2023
Accepted: 11 March 2024

Keywords:
al-An'aam,
the Glorious Qur'ān Translation,
Complementary Opposition (CO),
Lexical Coherence.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates whether complementary oppositions (COs) in the Glorious Qur'ān have been accurately translated from Arabic into English. The research is based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory of lexical cohesion, focusing on lexical cohesive devices in three selected translations of COs in Surah Al-An'aam. COs are defined as paired semantic opposites, where the negation of one reinforces the meaning of the other. This qualitative study employs an analytical-documentary method to evaluate the translations. Translators often face challenges, particularly with collocations, as they strive to preserve both meaning and form. The selected theoretical framework by Halliday and Hasan (1976) examines lexical cohesive devices such as repetition, collocations, and sense relations. The primary objective is to assess the lexical coherence of the selected translations and analyze the lexical relationships between English CO equivalents, which function as key cohesive devices. The study uses Arabic CO examples from Seyyedi and Baghojary (2020) alongside their English translations by Arberry (1955), Pickthall (1930), and Qaraa'i (2005), sourced from the online Tanzil Qur'ān Navigator. Findings indicate that Arberry's translation demonstrates the highest lexical coherence due to its alignment with the Qur'ānic style and frequent use of collocations and contrasting repetition.

How to cite this article: Taghavi Baghan, M., Yazdani, M. and Akbari, O. (2024). An Examination of Lexical Coherence in Three English Translations of Complementary Oppositions in Surah Al-An'aam. *International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies*, *2*(2), 172-187. doi: 10.22081/ttais.2025.70251.1043

1. Introduction

The Noble Qur'ān is both a sacred text and a miraculous scripture. Its divine author, Allah, Jalla Jalaaluh, chose Arabic—renowned for its precision—as the language through which His message would be revealed to the world. Consequently, translating this Final Word into other languages is crucial for making its divine teachings accessible to non-Arabic speakers worldwide. Literary translation studies explore the challenges of transferring aesthetic and meaningful speech from one language to another while ensuring compatibility between linguistic systems and meanings in the target language (TL) (Siddiek, 2018). As the primary and most authoritative source of Islamic teachings, the Qur'ān is not only a religious text but also a profound linguistic and literary masterpiece (Seyyedi & Baghojary, 2020).

The potential of interlanguage translation has been debated for centuries, with discussions focusing on the relationship between language and meaning. Some scholars argue that achieving a fully accurate translation is practically—if not theoretically—impossible due to the deep connection between language and meaning. Others, however, view this relationship as less rigid. While they recognize certain limitations in translation, they maintain that linguistic equivalence is a relative rather than an absolute concept (Palumbo, 2011).

Many translators have rendered the Holy Qur'ān into English, with Arberry, Pickthall, and Qaraa'i standing out as notable figures in this field. Among them, Pickthall (1930) is particularly renowned for his eloquent translation and insightful linguistic perspectives on translating the Glorious Qur'ān. He upheld the theory of the Qur'ān's untranslatability, arguing that the structure, lexicon, and semantics of the English language cannot fully convey the profound meanings and richness of the original Arabic text.

Pickthall acknowledged that his translation was literal. His work was also the first English translation of the Qur'ān by a native English speaker. Arberry's (1955) translation, compared to others, placed greater emphasis on preserving the Qur'ān's style (Shahpari et al., 2014). Qaraa'i, born in 1947, was of Indian and Iranian descent. He served as the editor-in-chief of the English-language Al-Tawheed magazine, and his translation of the Qur'ān was published in Qom, Iran, in 2004 (Amery & Hosseini, 2016).

In Arabic, opposition occurs at the word level, involving opposing lexemes and meanings. It is a lexical-semantic phenomenon in which opposite words and meanings are paired within discourse. Arabic rhetoricians and semanticists agree that lexemes are considered opposites when their meanings are directly contrasting. Al-Madani (1968) classified semantic oppositions (antonymy) into lexical and semantic categories, where either two words or two meanings are placed in opposition (Hassanein, 2020). Antonymy is one of the key conceptual relationships between words and serves as a crucial factor in textual cohesion. In some cases, the strong association between opposing words leads to their frequent co-occurrence, as hearing one naturally evokes the other. Examples of such paired opposites include *up and down* or *left and right* (Valiei et al., 2016).

Complementary opposition is a type of semantic opposition and a category of sense relations. In this form of opposition, the existence of one word inherently negates the meaning of the other. A key characteristic of complementary opposition is that it cannot be classified as a gradable opposite (Seyyedi & Baghojary, 2020). Cruse (2004) describes complementariness as a form of oppositeness that exhibits inherent binarity. Similarly, Hurford et al. (2007), Saeed (2005), and Kreidler (1998) refer to these opposites as binary antonyms (Winiharti, n.d.). Understanding complementary opposition is essential, as it

significantly influences the meaning and coherence of translated texts. A thorough analysis of how complementary oppositions are translated can provide valuable insights into translators' strategies and the resulting lexical cohesion in translated works.

Translating religious expressions requires careful attention to preserve their meaning while ensuring alignment between the source and target languages. Overcoming challenges related to equivalence, language differences, and other linguistic issues is essential for achieving accurate translations (Khammyseh, 2015). The translation of the Qur'ān into English has consistently faced various challenges and shortcomings. As a result, researchers have made extensive efforts to identify these issues and analyze lexical cohesive devices in both the source and target texts. Evaluating these challenges through comparison and resolution has been conducted using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model (Shahpari et al., 2014).

The aim of this study was to address the gap in existing research on the translation of complementary oppositions (COs) in the Holy Qur'ān. Focusing on translations of Surah Al-An'aam by Arberry, Pickthall and Qaraa'i, the research sought to assess how each translator reflected COs in English. Additionally, by Allah's will, the study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of lexical cohesion as a crucial element of effective translation, particularly in religious texts, where preserving the source text's meaning is vital. The study evaluated translation accuracy, cohesion, transparency, and stylistic fidelity to the original Qur'ānic text. To guide the research, the following questions were addressed:

1. What strategies have the translators employed to render COs into English?

2. To what extent do the pairs of COs exhibit lexical coherence in the English translations of Surah Al-An'aam?

3. What is the frequency of acceptable equivalents for COs across the three English translations of Surah Al-An'aam?

2. Literature Review

Safavi (2000) and Chesterman (2016) are notable linguists who have authored influential books on semantics and translation theory. Chesterman's Memes of Translation addresses metatheoretical, practical, and theoretical aspects of translation, while Safavi's An Introduction to Semantics offers a valuable analysis of semantic concepts. Lotfipour (2000) wrote An Introduction to the Principle of Translation, a widely used textbook in universities.

Furthermore, researchers have published articles examining various aspects of semantics. Winiharti (n.d.) analyzed sense relations, focusing on synonymy and antonymy. He categorized sense relations into two primary groups: the first group pertains to relations of sameness, such as synonymy, while the second addresses relations of oppositeness, such as antonymy. The paper highlights both types of sense relations, underscoring their importance in the field of semantics (Winiharti, n.d., p. 100).

The research titled "An Assessment of Lexical Sense Relations Based on the Word Association Test" was conducted by Asghari Nekah, Akhlaghi, and Ebrahimi (n.d.). Gjergo and Delija (2014) examined antonyms in English and Albanian. The study "The Semantic Opposition of Haq in the Qur'ān" is grounded in constructive semantics. Fathi, Ghasempour, and Khorasani (2020) provided an extensive explanation of all the semantic categories of

opposition. In the article “Beyond Semantic Opposition”, Fasasi (2020) also addressed this topic. The findings suggest that contextual oppositions (or pragmatic oppositions) refer to relationships where words, phrases, and larger expressions, which would typically not be contrasted or incompatible, are forced to appear as opposites due to their contradictory semantics and syntactic ordering within context (Fasasi, 2020).

Additionally, numerous articles have examined the meaning of words through Halliday’s (1976) theory of lexical cohesion. A few notable examples include “Traversing the Lexical Cohesion Minefield”by McGee (2009) and “Lexical Cohesion in Multiparty Conversations” by María de los González (2010), which explores 'associative cohesion. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, González (2010) tested the adequacy of this model against lexical corpora of broadcast discussions from the International Corpus of English.

Another significant study is “Study on Lexical Cohesion in English and Persian Research Articles: A Comparative Study” by Mirzapour and Ahmadi (2011). This research found that the sub-types of lexical cohesion occur in the following descending order: repetition, collocation, synonymy, general noun, meronymy, hyponymy, and antonymy. In the English data, there was a noticeable tendency toward the use of repetition and collocation. This study has implications for teachers and researchers in the field of English as a foreign language, suggesting that teaching the sub-types of lexical cohesion to foreign language learners can enhance their reading and writing skills (Mirzapour & Ahmadi, 2011).

In various fields, including Arabic literature, linguistics, culture, and Qur’ānic studies, numerous articles have been written on the coherence of Qur’ānic surahs. One such article is “Lexical Coherence in Surah al-Sajdah” by Navidi (2023), which demonstrates that Surah al-Sajdah exhibits strong lexical coherence due to repetition and collocation. In particular, antonymy plays a significant role in this Surah, aligning with the central theme of the text, which contrasts the believers and unbelievers (Navidi, 2023). Another significant study is Oraki's (2016) “Linguistics”, which analyzed the elements of textual coherence in Surah al-Naas based on Halliday and Hassan's (1976) theory. The research compared the cohesion in the original Arabic text with its Persian translation, revealing both similarities and differences in lexical and grammatical factors. The study concluded that both versions display considerable cohesion, with lexical elements playing a key role in maintaining text coherence (Oraki & Visi, 2016).

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach within a qualitative research design, focusing on the relationship between vocabulary characteristics in terms of meaning. Specifically, it employs qualitative analysis to examine the translation of complementary oppositions (COs) in three English translations of Surah al-An'aam from the Glorious Qur’ān.

3.2. Procedures

To achieve the objectives of this study, the Holy Qur’ān—one of the most revered texts in Islam—was selected as the primary source. A qualitative approach was deemed particularly suitable, as it facilitates an in-depth examination of linguistic features, translator choices, and the inherent complexities of translating religious texts. The Arabic source text

of Surah al-An'aam was extracted from An Attitude on the Stylistic Features of the Holy Qur'ān in Collocations, coauthored by Seyyedi and Baghojary (2020). According to the data in this book, Surah al-An'aam contains approximately 30 complementary oppositions (COs), 10 of which are repetitive. The corresponding English translations, as rendered by Arberry, Pickthall, and Qaraa'i, were then collected from the Tanzil website (www.tanzil.net).

3.3. Data Analysis

Using Halliday and Hassan's theoretical framework from Cohesion in English (1976), this study examined Surah Al-An'aam from the Holy Qur'ān, comparing it with the selected translations mentioned earlier. These translations were chosen for their significance and the distinct methods each translator employed to convey the meanings of the original Arabic text. The analysis focused on identifying and evaluating cohesive devices in the translations. Following this comparison, the study assessed lexical cohesion using Halliday and Hassan's (1976) theory, particularly examining repetition and summation. The aim was to determine how effectively each translator preserved the coherence and integrity of the original text.

3.5. Theoretical Model

The model used in this study is based on Halliday and Hassan's theoretical framework, as outlined in Cohesion in English (1976). This framework comprises the following elements:

3.5.1. Lexical Coherence

The defining characteristic of a text is coherence, as a text cannot exist without it. However, texts may vary in the strength of their cohesion. The vocabulary used in cohesive devices is generally categorized into two main types: repetition and collocation (Kherghani, 2020).

Halliday and Hassan (1976) classified cohesive elements in English texts into three main categories:

- Grammatical cohesion, which includes reference, substitution, and ellipsis.
- Lexical cohesion, which involves repetition and collocation.
- Conjunctive cohesion, which consists of conjunctions that link clauses and sentences (Naghib et al., 2019).

Ultimately, lexical cohesion is established through textual cohesion. Halliday and Hassan (1976) further divided lexical cohesion into two key types: reiteration and collocation (McGee, 2009).

3.5.2. Repetition

In lexical cohesion, repetition refers to the repeated use of concepts or words within a text. Repetition can take various forms, including:

- Repetition of the same word

- Repetition of synonymous words
- Repetition of words that encompass a previous word
- Musical repetition

These types of repetition contribute to the coherence of a text (Taleghani, n.d.). While many words may appear multiple times in a text, cohesion is primarily achieved through the repetition of key content words. Function words, such as prepositions and conjunctions, may frequently occur, but they play a lesser role in establishing cohesion. Instead, content words—such as those related to synonymy, semantic opposition (antonymy), hyponymy, and meronymy—are the primary contributors to textual cohesion (Ghazvini & Eishani, 2015).

Repetition can be categorized into general repetition and partial repetition. In general repetition, two words appear in close proximity, while in partial (or distant) repetition, repeated words are distributed across different sentences (Eghbali et al., 2017).

3.5.3. Collocations

Collocation refers to the natural association of certain words with one another, allowing distinctions in meaning between similar words. The concept was first introduced by British linguist Firth (1950) and later refined by Halliday (1976) and Sinclair (1999), who established it as a fundamental principle in the study of words and their interaction with syntax in forming semantic units (Palumbo, 2011). Collocations represent a type of lexical correlation that arises from the habitual co-occurrence of words, meaning they tend to appear together in specific contexts. This association contributes to textual cohesion by creating connections between sentences. When a particular word frequently appears alongside specific other words within a linguistic unit, its presence can predict the occurrence of those words. As a result, collocated words form recognizable word sets that enhance coherence in a text.

In syntagmatic collocation, a verb or adjective typically appears alongside a noun in a fixed, conventionalized way that is predetermined by linguistic norms. For example, the phrase ‘old man’ is commonly used, whereas ‘ancient man’ sounds unnatural. However, ‘ancient book’ is an acceptable collocation. On the other hand, associative collocation occurs when words are grouped based on shared characteristics that place them within the same semantic domain. For instance, words like ‘moon’, ‘star’, and ‘sun’ all belong to the domain of celestial bodies. Additionally, collocations can be expanded through semantic opposites, synonymy, and hyponymy, which create further connections between words (Kherghani, 2020; Oraki & Visi, 2016). In translation, frequency is also an important cohesive device to ensure consistency and effectiveness. The prevalence of certain words in a language plays a key role in conveying meaning accurately to the target audience. A deep understanding of vocabulary frequency enables translators to produce high-quality translations that faithfully reflect the source text while maintaining linguistic and cultural appropriateness (Vaezian, 2013).

4. Results and discussions

Due to the limitations of academic publications, presenting a detailed discussion of all the data would make this paper overly lengthy. Therefore, a representative sample is provided below, while the full statistical analysis of all data is available in the corresponding tables.

4.1. Translators' strategies

An analysis of the three English translations of Surah al-Anam provided valuable insights into how complementary oppositions (COs) are reflected in English, contributing to the resulting lexical coherence. The following sections will discuss the findings, focusing on the strategies employed by each translator and the implications of these choices on the coherence of the translated text and CO frequency.

The results of the analysis of Arabic complementary oppositions (COs) and their English translations by Arberry, Pickthall, and Qaraa'i are presented in Table 1. This table outlines the Arabic complementary oppositions from Surah Al-An'aam alongside their English equivalents as translated by Arberry, Pickthall, and Qaraa'i. It also highlights the verses where each CO occurs and compares the lexical choices made by the three translators. The use of complementary opposites is vital for maintaining the coherence and meaning of the Qur'ānic text, and the table illustrates the similarities and differences in translation strategies among these three prominent English versions. The study identifies 20 instances of COs in Surah Al-An'aam and compares how each translator approached them:

Table 1. Arabic COs with the English Equivalents of COs Translated by Arberry (A), Pickthall (P) & Qaraa'i (Q)

No	ST	Pickthall's TT	Qaraa'i's TT	Arberry's TT	Verse No.
1	السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْض	The Heavens /the earth (n)	The heavens /the earth (n)	The heavens /the earth (n)	1-3-12-14-73-75-79-101
2	سِرَّكُمْ وَجَهْرَكُمْ	Your secret/(n) your utterance) n)	Your secret(n) your overt [matters] (n)	Your secret(n)/you publish(v)	3
3	الْأَرْضِ والسَّمَاءَ	The earth/(n) the sky(n)	The land(n)/ the sky(n)	The earth /(n)loosed heaven(n)	6
4	اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ	The-at night (n) # the- by day(n)	The-by night(n) # the- by day(n)	The –by night (n) # the-by day(n)	13-60
5	بِضُرٍّ— بِخَيْرٍ	With Affliction(n) / with good(n)	Some Distress (n)/ some good(n)	Whit Affliction(n)/ with good(n)	17
6	بَدَا— يُخْفُونَ	Become Clear(adj)/ to hide(v)	To hide(v)/become evident(adj)	Were concealing(v) /has appeared(v)	28
7	الدُّنْيَا- الْآخِرَةُ	The world(n)/the hereafter(n)	The world(n)/the hereafter(n)	The present (n)life/the Last	32

No	ST	Pickthall's TT	Qaraa'i's TT	Arberry's TT	Verse No.
				Abode(n) collocation (Adj + n)	
8	الْأَرْضِ و السَّمَاءِ	The earth (n)/the sky(n)	The ground(n) /in to sky(n)	The earth (n)/in heaven(n)	35
9	بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ	Their Lord morn(n)/ evening(n)	At morning(n)/ at evening(n)	At morning(n) /at evening(n)	52
10	الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ	The land(n) / the sea(n)	In-Of land (n)/in-of sea(n)	In-of land(n) / in-of sea(n)	59-63-97
11	لَا يَنفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا	Neither profiteth (n) / nor hurteth (n)	Neither benefit(v) / nor harm(v)	Neither profits (v) /nor hurts(v)	71
12	تُبْدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ	Ye Show(v)/ye hide(v)	You display(v)/ you conceal(v)	Revealing(v)/ hiding(v)	91
13	الْحَيِّ و الْمَيِّتِ	The living(n) #the dead(n)	The dead(n) /the living(n)	The living(n) # the dead (n)	95
14	الْإِصْبَاحِ وَ اللَّيْلَ	The daybreak/ the night(n)	The dawn/the night(n)	Into dawn/the night(n)	96
15	بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ	Sons & daughters(n)	Sons & daughters(n)	Sons & daughters(n)	100
16	ظَاهِرَ وَبَاطِنَهُ	Outwardness (n) /inwardness(n)	Renounce outward(adj)#the inward(adj)	The outward(adj)#the inward(adj)	120
17	ٱلذَّكَرَيْنِ- الْأُنثَيَيْنِ	Two males(n)#two females(n)	Two males(n)#two females(n)	Two males(n)# two females(n)	144
18	ظَهَرَو بَطَنَ	Whether open(v)/or concealed(v)	The outward(adj)# the inward(adj)	Any outward(adj)# any inward(adj)	151
19	بِالْحَسَنَةِ وبِالسَّيِّئَةِ	*A good deed /an ill-deed Collocation (adj + n)*	Bring Virtue(n)#bring vice(n)	A *good* deed # an *evil* deed(n) *Collocation (adj + n)*	160
20	وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي	My living (n)/ my dying(n)	My life (n)/ my death(n)	My living(n)/ my dying(n)	162

Note. '#' indicates opposites based on Oxford & Longman Dictionary.

Table 1 illustrates the dimensions of CO translation in the three translations of *Surah al-An'aam* by Arberry, Qaraa'i, and Pickthall, classified into the following categories:

- Words whose opposites are listed in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and the *Oxford Dictionary*, which the three translators selected as equivalents. Examples include 'sons and daughters' or 'light gray'.

- Words with opposites found in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and the *Oxford Dictionary,* which were also chosen by the three translators as equivalents. Examples include ‘inward’ and ‘outward’.

- Syntactic collocations, including repeated types, selected by the translators as equivalents, such as ‘good deed’ and ‘evil deed’.

As with the phrase ‘good deeds’, syntagmatic relations are established. When the word ‘deed’ appears in this context, the subconscious evokes a range of related words, such as bad, dirty, brave, evil, and so on. Therefore, both speaking and writing involve the interplay of these two types of relationships (Kenary & Rahbar, 2022).

- The fourth category concerns equivalents chosen by the translators based on their individual linguistic preferences, which are not found in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English nor used in the Oxford Dictionary. These include the following.

4.2. Elaboration and Analysis of the Table Data

In the present section, more important items are selected from Table 1 above to be analyzed:

No	ST	Pickthall’s TT	Qaraa’i’s TT	Arberry’s TT	Verse No.
2	سِرَّكُمْ وَجَهْرَكُمْ	Your secret/(n) your utterance) n)	Your secret(n) your overt [matters] (n)	Your secret(n)/you publish(v)	3

When attempting to translate 'جَهْرَكُمْ', confronted with a variety of possible, acceptable equivalents, each translated has chosen the equivalent that he deemed more accurate, probably based on the commentary to which he has referred; each has tried to preserve the most out of the form and the meaning by choosing a more specific equivalent. This means that the ST CO has been translated as the more specific CO in the TT.

No	ST	Pickthall’s TT	Qaraa’i’s TT	Arberry’s TT	Verse No.
5	بِضُرٍّ— بِخَيْرٍ	With Affliction(n) / with good(n)	Some Distress (n)/ some good(n)	Whit Affliction(n)/ with good(n)	17

As for the TL equivalents provided by the translators for the complementary opposition ب ِضُرّ—بِخَيْر, all the translators have used the word 'good', which is a general word, and 'distress/affliction', as more specific words respectively. Affliction is a noun and explains something that causes pain or suffering, especially in medical conditions. It means 'pain'. 'Good' means 'morally right' or making 'healthy and pleasant', which one enjoys. The opposite of 'good' is 'bad', which is a general word. 'distress', however, has been defined as the 'feeling of extreme unhappiness', just as 'affliction' is. Therefore, the more generic CO in the ST has been translated with more specific TL equivalents.

No	ST	Pickthall's TT	Qaraa'i's TT	Arberry's TT	Verse No.
7	الدُّنْيَا- الْآخِرَةُ	The world(n)/the hereafter(n)	The world(n)/the hereafter(n)	The present (n)life/the Last Abode(n); collocation (Adj + n)	32

In search for TL equivalents for the SL CO الدُّنْيَا- الْآخِرَةُ, P and Q have provided the same CO in the TT: the world and the hereafter. A, however, has provided 'the present life/the Last Abode. The former have employed more generic COs, while the latter has done a more specific one. The former is a more common, collocation-like CO, while the latter is a more creative CO, which might be later introduced in the TL.

No	ST	Pickthall's TT	Qaraa'i's TT	Arberry's TT	Verse No.
8	الْأَرْضِ و السَّمَاءِ	The earth (n)/the sky(n)	The ground(n) /in to sky(n)	The earth (n)/in heaven(n)	35

As for the ST Co 'الْأَرْضِ والسَّمَاءَ', P has used a common collocation, semantically more specific than the ST CO; Q has used a less common collocation, semantically more specific, and less common as a CO in the TL; and finally, A has used a common collocation, yet more frequent in the religious context of the TL. While 'sky' denotes a physical meaning, 'heaven' does a more spiritual meaning.

No	ST	Pickthall's TT	Qaraa'i's TT	Arberry's TT	Verse No.
11	لَا يَنفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا	Neither profiteth (n) / nor hurteth (n)	Neither benefit(v) / nor harm(v)	Neither profits (v) /nor hurts(v)	71

The CO 'نفع/ضر' in the ST has been translated as benefit/hurt; benefit/harm; and profit/hurt by P, Q, and A respectively. P's profit/hurt is an archaic CO. In Q's benefit/harm, the former is a noun meaning 'an advantage that something gives you', while the latter is a noun, an old English word meaning 'damage or injury that is caused by a person or an event'. As in A, *profit* is used as a verb and is related to 'money and the money that you make in business or by selling things'; it is a middle English word. And *hurt* is a verb that means 'injure' in Middle English. Thus, P has employed an Archaic CO in the TT, while the other two have used less archaic ones. However, Q's choice seems closer to the SL CO in terms of the degree of generality.

No	ST	Pickthall's TT	Qaraa'i's TT	Arberry's TT	Verse No.
12	تُبْدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ	Ye Show(v)/ye hide(v)	You display(v)/ you conceal(v)	Revealing(v)/ hiding(v)	91

Confronted by the SL CO 'بدی/خفی', the translators have used different equivalents to form different COs in the TL. Pickthall has employed the TL CO 'show/hide', while Q has used 'display/conceal', and A has done 'reveal/hide' as the equivalents for the SL CO تُبْدُونَهَا/تخفون. 'Show' is a verb meaning 'to let someone see something and to make something clear', while

'display' is a verb meaning 'to show something to people and provide them with information'. 'Clear', on the other hand, means 'obvious, apparent, evident, plain, and easy to see or understand', and 'hide' is a verb that means 'to conceal, to put or keep somebody in a hiding state; 'hide' and 'conceal' are synonymous. 'Conceal' is a verb, meaning 'to hide somebody or something'. 'Reveal' is a verb, meaning 'show', as the opposite of 'conceal'. It means 'to disclose' and is a late Middle English word. The dictionary-based analysis proves that while P's selection is a non-religious CO, Q's is a religious CO, and A's is somewhere in between.

No	ST	Pickthall's TT	Qaraa'i's TT	Arberry's TT	Verse No.
14	الْإِصْبَاحِ وَ اللَّيْلَ	The daybreak/ the night(n)	The dawn/the night(n)	Into dawn/the night(n)	96

As for the SL CO الْإِصْبَاحِ وَ اللَّيْلَ, 'daybreak/night' and 'dawn/night' have been used in the TTs as two equivalents by the three translators. 'Night' is a noun, denoting 'the time when it is dark'. 'Dawn' is a noun, meaning 'the time when it is partially dark in the daybreak time'; on the other hand, 'daybreak' has a different meaning: 'the beginning the day, when it begins to become light'. To compare them, it can be said that Q and A's 'dawn/night' is a more common, collocation-like CO that might appeal more to everyday readers, while P's CO is more likely to appeal stylistically to more selective readers.

No	ST	Pickthall's TT	Qaraa'i's TT	Arberry's TT	Verse No.
18	ظَهَرَو بَطَنَ	Whether open(v)/or concealed(v)	The outward(adj)# the inward(adj)	Any outward(adj)# any inward(adj)	151

The SL CO ظَهَرَو بَطَنَ has been translated in two ways by P on the one hand and Q/A on the other. Pickthall has used equivalents of a more historical style with a formal and literary style. The other two translators have used 'inward' and 'outward'; 'outward' is connected with 'the way people or things seem to be' rather than with 'what is true'. 'Inward' is an adjective, meaning 'what is inside your mind and not visible to others'.

4.3. Summation of the Analyses

To sum up, the analyses above showed that although each translator has employed his own distinct selection of semantic pairs to reflect the ST Cos in each ayah, all of them have both distinguished and transferred the COs in the TTs, though with different stylistic registers and different degrees of generic or specific meanings.

Arberry has demonstrated a stronger desire to preserve the original style of the Qur'ān, using rich lexical choices and the frequent use of repetition. His translation often reflects a deeper interaction with the semantic implications of the ST COs, increasing the cohesion of the text. He has employed words more understandable to English speakers, especially as regards highly literate readership. Picktall, the same as Arberry, was also diligently committed to the application of a more historical vocabulary. However, his COs can appeal to today's readership less than Arberry's selections do. Finally, Qaraa'i's selected COs reflect little literary or historical styles and address the reading taste of the moder reader in contrast to the other two translators.

From the perspective of the frequency of acceptable COs in the TTs in Surah al-An'aam by Arberry, Pickthall, and Qaraa'i, the summation of the above analyses shows that Arberry's translation contains the highest number of acceptable COs, reflecting a stronger adherence to lexical cohesion as well as the Qur'ānic style, while the translated COs of the other two translators contain fewer acceptable COs in terms of lexical cohesion and the appropriate style for the translation of the Glorious Qur'ān.

5. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of Complementary Opposition (CO) in the English translations of Surah Al-An'aam offers valuable insights into the complexities of translating this linguistic feature. The findings highlight the distinct strategies used by each translator, which play a crucial role in shaping the coherence and depth of the translated text.

5.1. Interpretative Differences in Translation

The collocational range of equivalent words across languages is never identical; it may overlap but will not completely match. Only a native speaker can accurately determine whether a collocation is acceptable, particularly when experimenting with new combinations. Languages are constantly evolving, leading to the expansion or reduction of a word's collocational range (Larson, 2011, pp. 212–213). While some synonyms share the same meaning (signified), they do not always carry the same value. Their significance can vary depending on the context. According to Saussure (1857), the relationship between the signifier and the signified, as well as the concept of value—determined by the interrelation of signs within a linguistic system—must be distinguished (Sojodi, 2003).

Markedness is one of the most significant cognitive processes utilized by the human mind. Much of our knowledge is shaped by comparing phenomena within oppositional relationships. We differentiate between concepts by identifying specific features present in one but absent in the other. The element lacking these distinguishing features is considered unmarked. Additionally, the unmarked component tends to have a broader distribution and appears more frequently than the marked component (Afrash, 2002). In Complementary Opposition (CO) structures, marked words rarely appear alongside unmarked words.

From a frequency distribution perspective, marked categories are generally less frequent than unmarked ones but are more cognitively prominent. The marked category is also cognitively more complex, requiring greater mental effort for processing (Ghaeminia, 2022). Markedness has been linked to frequency, as Greenberg (1966) and Zwicky (1978) observed that the unmarked member of an opposition occurs more often than the marked member. However, while this pattern may hold, Waugh (1982) argued that frequency should not define markedness but rather be a consequence of other underlying principles.

Since the unmarked member can appear in a wider range of contexts and is used when contrast is neutralized, it tends to occur more frequently (Lehrer, 1987, p. 103). A translator must understand the distinction between generic and specific words, as this knowledge can help in finding an appropriate lexical equivalent. However, without this awareness, identifying a suitable equivalent can be challenging. When translating relatively specific words, finding a close equivalent is usually easier, as specific vocabulary is more likely to correspond between two languages. In contrast, translating generic words can be more difficult, as generic vocabulary varies significantly across languages and often lacks exact

equivalents. Simply searching for a direct equivalent of a generic word in the source language will not always yield an accurate translation (Larson, 2011, pp. 102–103).

5.2. Preservation of Lexical Cohesion

The study's emphasis on lexical cohesion underscores its importance in assessing translation quality. Halliday and Hassan's (1976) framework serves as a valuable tool for analyzing how different translators handle cohesion. The findings suggest that greater lexical cohesion leads to a more faithful representation of the original text's meaning, reinforcing the need for translators to carefully consider linguistic features to produce translations that are both accurate and stylistically consistent. Since style emerges within a specific linguistic system, evaluating the styles of both the author and the translator depends on two key factors: the quality of word and expression selection and the way they are combined to maintain cohesion throughout the text. One of the defining characteristics of an effective style is its coherence and uniformity (Khazaeifar, 2018).

Arberry's translation stands out for its high frequency of COs and effective use of lexical cohesion. His approach demonstrates a strong commitment to preserving the Qur'ānic style, utilizing repetition and rich lexical choices to maintain the semantic depth of the original text. This strategy not only enhances the aesthetic quality of the translation but also facilitates a deeper understanding of its theological concepts.

By frequently employing synonyms and antonyms, Arberry enables readers to engage with the text on multiple levels, reinforcing the interconnected meanings inherent in COs. His translation reflects a deep engagement with the semantic implications of these oppositions, contributing to greater textual coherence. Similarly, Qaraa'i's translation adopts a modern interpretative stance, aiming to present the text in a way that resonates with contemporary readers. In contrast, Pickthall's translation, while accurate, often prioritizes clarity over cohesion. This approach may make the text more accessible but risks diminishing some of its original depth. His literal translation of COs, though precise, sometimes results in a less nuanced interpretation of the Qur'ānic message. While committed to accuracy, his more literal approach occasionally leads to reduced textual cohesion.

6. Conclusion

Lexical cohesive devices include repetition and collocation (syntactic and associative collocation), both of which were utilized by all three translators in their translations of Surah Al-An'aam. The acceptable equivalents of cohesive opposites (COs) in this Surah include:

- COs found in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and the *Oxford Dictionary*: *night/day, son/daughter, living/dead, male/female, virtue/vice,* and *good deed/evil deed* (*good/evil* being a syntactic collocation).

- COs repeated in all three translations: *Heaven/earth* and *land/sea.*

- COs repeated twice: *morning/evening, outward/inward, affliction/good, world/hereafter,* and *dawn/night.*

The total number of repetitions of acceptable equivalents across the translations is as follows: Pickthall = 20, Arberry = 23, and Qaraa'i = 21.

This study addresses a gap in research on the translation of COs in the Qur'ān, emphasizing the role of lexical cohesion in preserving the integrity of the text. Arberry's translation stands out for its consistency and adherence to the Qur'ānic style. The findings suggest that translators must carefully consider semantic relationships within the text to maintain the Qur'ān's meaning and stylistic coherence. Overall, the discussion highlights the intricate relationship between translation strategies, lexical cohesion, and meaning preservation in religious texts. The varying approaches of Arberry, Pickthall, and Qaraa'i illustrate the challenges of translating complex linguistic structures and underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of the source text.

Arberry's translation demonstrates a higher degree of lexical coherence due to his meticulous attention to the Qur'ānic style. His translation frequently preserves semantic relationships and the repetition of key words, resulting in a more cohesive rendering. In contrast, Pickthall's translation, while more literal, sometimes lacks the stylistic fluidity found in Arberry's work. Qaraa'i's translation, though accurate, occasionally diverges in lexical choices, affecting overall cohesion. The frequency analysis reveals that Arberry employs COs in a manner that closely mirrors the original Arabic structure, enhancing clarity and flow.

For future research, the lexical coherence of Qur'ānic Surahs in other English translations could be explored further. This would involve analyzing the use of synonyms, antonyms, and other conceptual relationships within a Surah, examining their repetition, and comparing the results across different translations.

References

Afrashi, A. (2002). *Thoughts in semantics*. Explore Culture.

Amery, M., & Hosseini, M. (2016). Review of English translations of the Qur'an by Arberry and Shakir and the recitation of the selected verses of Surah al-Ra'ad. *Quarterly Research on the Interpretation and Language of the Qur'an, 8*, 7–24.

Eghbali, A., Sayadinezhad, R., & Fazeli, M. H. (2017). Analysis of lexical coherence in Surah al-Ankabout. *Journal of Interpretation and Language of Qur'an, 11*, 91–110. https://doi.org/10.30473/Qur'an.2017.4711

Fasasi, K. A. (2020). Beyond semantic opposition: Contextual opposites in Osun dare's *The Eye of The Earth*. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 11*(5), 48–54. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.11n.5p.48 *(Note: Expanded "ALLS" to full journal name if possible.)*

Ghazvini, M. N., & Eshani, T. (2015). Comparison of the use of cohesion factors in Surah Al-An'aam and its translation by Saffaarzadeh. *Journal of Qur'anic Researches, 74*(1), 120–145.

González, M. G. (2010). Lexical cohesion in multiparty conversations. *Language Sciences, 33*, 167–179. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2010.08.002

Hassanein, H. (2020). Identical twins, different wombs: A literature review on ittibaaq in Arabic and antonymy in English. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies,

20*(2), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes2000.20.2.1 *(Note: Added journal title if available.)*

Kenari, M. K., & Rahbar, N. (2022). Saussure according to Derrida: Writing as a usurper as ab order. *Basic Western Studies, 26*(2), 169–185. https://doi.org/10.30465/os.2023.40016.1803

Khammyseh, D. (2015). The problems in translating Islamic expressions in religious occasions. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(35), 103–109.

Khazaeifar, A. (2018). Translator style. *The Translator, 26*(63), 3–12.

Kherghani, H. (2020). Synonyms in Surah Al-An'aam and its role in coherence. *Qur'anic Researches and Tradition, 52*(2), 285–306. http://dx.doi.org/10.22059/jqst.2020.294696.669433

Larson, M. L. (2011). *Meaning-based translation: A guide to cross-language equivalence* (2nd ed.). University Press of America. *(Note: Added edition if applicable.)*

Lehrer, A. (1987). Markedness and antonymy. *Journal of Linguistics, 21*(2), 397–429. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002222670001032X

McGee, L. (2009). Traversing the lexical cohesion minefield. *ELT Journal, 63*(3), 212–220. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccn040 *(Note: Expanded "Oxford University Press" to journal name.)*

Mirzapour, F., & Ahmadi, M. (2011). A study on lexical cohesion in English and Persian research articles: A comparative study. *English Language Teaching, 4*(4), 245–253. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v4n4p245

Naghib, S. M., Sazjini, M., & Mosavi, S. M. (2019). A comparative analytical study of Bahrampour's and Safavi's translations of the Qur'an: A case study of Surah al-Naazi'aat based on the coherence model of Halliday and Hassan. *Qur'anic Studies and Islamic Culture, 2*(4), 121–143.

Navidi, A. (2023). Lexical coherence in Surah al-Sajdah. *Journal of Literary-Qur'anic Researches, 1*(11), 32–49. http://dx.doi.org/10.22034/paq.2023.708861

Oraki, G. H., & Visi, A. (2016). Examining the application of elements of textual coherence in Surah al-mubarakeh al-Naas and its Persian translation based on the theory of textual coherence by Halliday and Hassan. *Qur'anic Sciences and Interpretation, 3*(1), 129–146.

Seyyedi, M., & Baghojary, A. (2020). *An attitude on the stylistic features of the Holy Qur'an in collocations*. Astaan Quds Razavi. *(Note: Italicized as a book.)*

Shahpari, A., Mahdavinia, M., & Samavati, A. (2017). The role of cohesive factors in English translations of the Qur'an. *Serajeh Monir, 8*(2), 7–42.

Siddiek, A. G. (2018). Review of some orientalists' approaches used in the translation of the Holy Qur'an. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature, 6*(4), 38–53. http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0604005

Sojudi, F. (2003). *Applied semiotics*. Ghesseh. *(Note: Removed "Tehran" per APA 7th unless needed for retrieval.)*

Taleghani, H. A. (n.d.). Lexical cohesion and its role in translation. *Translator, 32*, 64–75. *(Note: Removed parentheses around issue number.)*

Vaezian, H. (2013). *Linguistic corpora and translation*. Ghatreh.

Valiei, Y., Ahosaini, M. M., & Farhadi, M. (2016). Factors of textual coherence in Surah al-Nuh. *Linguistic Research of the Qur'an, 9*(1), 69–86.

Winiharti, M. (2010). Sense relations in language learning. *Humanora, 1*(1), 100–106.

International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies

Journal homepage: http://ttais.akhs.bou.ac.ir/

An Analysis of Six English Translations of Qur'ānic Proper Nouns in Ligh of Chesterman's Translation Strategies

Samad Mirza Suzani[1*]

1. Department of English, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran

* Corresponding author: smirzasuzani@yahoo.com

https://doi.org/10.22081/ttais.2025.70501.1046

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: 9 December 2023
Revised: 1 January 2024
Accepted: 11 March 2024

Keywords:
Chesterman's (1997) model,
Loan translation,
Paraphrase,
Proper nouns,
Translational strategies,
Synonymy.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the strategies employed in translating Qur'ānic proper names, using Chesterman's (1997) model as the theoretical framework. To achieve this, 100 Arabic proper nouns were purposively sampled to analyze the frequency and distribution of translation strategies across six English translations of the Holy Qur'ān. The translations considered were those by Yusuf Ali (1934), Pickthall (1930), Saffarzadeh (2001), Arberry (1973), Qarai (2003), and Shakir (1993). After identifying all proper names, the translation strategies utilized by each translator were coded and compared. The findings revealed that all translators relied on three primary strategies: loan translation, paraphrase, and synonymy, though their usage varied in frequency. Loan translation emerged as the most frequently used strategy among all translators, whereas paraphrase was the least used, except in the cases of Saffarzadeh and Shakir. Specifically, Saffarzadeh applied paraphrase and synonymy with equal frequency, while Shakir favored paraphrase over synonymy. In conclusion, the analysis showed that all six translators employed only three of the strategies outlined in Chesterman's (1997) model. Loan translation was the predominant strategy, followed by synonymy and paraphrase, with the latter two varying slightly in their order of frequency among Saffarzadeh and Shakir.

How to cite this article: Mirza Suzani, S. (2024). An Analysis of Six English Translations of Qur'ānic Proper Nouns in Ligh of Chesterman's Translation Strategies. *International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies*, *2*(2), 188-202. doi: 10.22081/ttais.2025.70501.1046

1. Introduction

Although the Holy Qur'ān was revealed to humanity over thirteen centuries ago, many aspects of this sacred text remain undisclosed. Religious texts, and the Holy Qur'ān in particular, are rich with culture-specific terms that require careful attention from translators, as readers may struggle to comprehend these concepts. The strategies used to translate such terms often depend on the specific text type (Newmark, 1998, as cited in Moradi & Sadeqi, 2014).

According to Schwarz (2003, as cited in Al-Yahya et al., 2010), translation involves navigating between two languages and their respective cultural frameworks, making an accurate translation crucial to achieving a balance between the two. He further explained that it is necessary to reevaluate English lexicons and translations to identify their specific characteristics. Schwarz also stated, "Transferring cultural features into the target language is the thorniest task a translator may encounter. Nonetheless, there are strategies to address these elements. These strategies assist the translator in transferring the cultural features of the source language into the target language with maximum clarity" (p. 24).

Rezvani and Nouraey (2014) emphasized the significance of shifts in translation within the context of culture-specific elements. They acknowledged that the Holy Qur'ān has been translated from Arabic, its source language, into many other target languages. In this regard, Rezvani and Nouraey (2014) argued that, during the translation of the Holy Qur'ān, the language and culturally bound linguistic and rhetorical characteristics are "inimitable and unproduceable in other languages to a satisfactory level in order to achieve equivalence" (p. 73). They further stated, "The Qur'ānic intricacies have no equivalents in the target language and represent unique examples of linguistic and cultural untranslatability" (p. 73).

Regarding the abundance of proper names in the Holy Qur'ān, Abu-Mahfouz (2011) argued that some proper names refer to individual people, while others denote historical locations or events. In this context, there are generally two standard approaches for handling proper names: if a proper name has a standard English equivalent, the translator should use that equivalent (Dickins, Hervey, & Higgins, 2002, as cited in Abu-Mahfouz, 2011, p. 5). For example, al-Masjid al-Aqṣā (المسجد الاقصى) is commonly known in English as 'al-Aqsa Mosque', al-Masjid al-Haram (المسجد الحرام) is referred to as Mecca, Yājūj and Mājūj (ياجوج و ماجوج) are known as Gog and Magog, and Saba (سبا) is referred to as Sheba. However, literal translation and transliteration should be avoided, as these techniques can negatively impact the readability of the target text. For instance, Arberry (1980) translates Al-Mash'ar al-Haram (المشعر الحرام) literally as 'The Holy Way Mark', which can confuse readers, making it difficult for even Muslims to fully understand the translation (p. 198).

Similarly, Al-Hilali and Khan (2009) use transliteration for all proper names, often presenting their standard English equivalents in brackets. This approach is less effective, as it clutters the translation with unnecessary brackets and does not provide clear information to the target readers. If the translators aim to familiarize the target audience with Arabic names, these names could be listed along with their English equivalents in an appendix at the end of the translation. Alternatively, the translator might include the phrase 'the people of' before Thamood (ثمود) to clarify the intended meaning, such as 'the people of Thamood', offering further explanation. This technique would effectively convey the meaning of the translation without hindering the target audience's understanding.

The present study aims to examine how elements of the original text, the Holy Qur'ān, are translated from the source language into the target language. The primary focus of this study is to describe and compare the translation strategies employed by six professional translators in rendering Qur'ānic nouns and proper names, using the taxonomy proposed by Chesterman (1997). Specifically, the study seeks to identify the similarities and/or differences among the translators in their application of strategies when translating proper names in the Holy Qur'ān.

2. Review of literature

According to Mirza Suzani (2008), the translation of proper nouns has long been a controversial and widely debated issue. Moreover, in relation to translatability, proper nouns can be classified from various perspectives (Mirza Suzani, 2009). In this context, a substantial body of research has examined the translation of proper nouns in the Holy Qur'ān. For instance, using Chesterman's (1997) model, Mirza Suzani (2023) conducted a study analyzing translation strategies for Allah's attributes in the Holy Qur'ān. The findings revealed that only six out of ten strategies were employed when translating Allah's attributes of acts. Among these, "transposition" and "emphasis change" were not significantly utilized, while the other four strategies—"synonymy," "paraphrase," "transliteration," and "expansion"—were applied to varying degrees.

Another study on the translation of divine names in the Holy Qur'ān was conducted by Asadi Amjad and Farahani (2013), who examined the translation of these names from Arabic into English in the works of Shakir (1993), Qarai (2003), and Nikayin (2006). Their findings revealed that the use of divine names in the Holy Qur'ān is unique, inimitable, and unparalleled, making it impossible to compare with any other context. Describing the challenges faced, Asadi Amjad and Farahani (2013) noted, the Arabic morphological patterns, such as "ism al-mobalegheh" (Hyperbolic Name, e.g., الغفّار) and "sifat al-Moshabbaheh" (Perpetual Attribute, e.g., العليمّ), presented significant challenges for translators. These patterns possess specific weights and effects within the Arabic language structure that could not be accurately replicated in English (p. 140).

Similarly, Abu-Mahfouz (2011, cited in Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015) identified several semantic issues in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English translation of the Holy Qur'ān. The problems highlighted were: (1) using a hyponym as an equivalent for a superordinate where the target language (TL) has an appropriate superordinate; (2) using a superordinate as an equivalent for a hyponym where the TL has a suitable hyponym; (3) translation through transliteration; and (4) inconsistency (Abu-Mahfouz, 2011, p. 67).

Al-Sowaid (2011) identified numerous challenges that translators may face when translating the Holy Qur'ān from Arabic into other languages, particularly concerning the translation of proper nouns, which are highly context-specific. Al-Sowaid's (2011) study was comprehensive, concluding that translators working from Arabic as the source language into English as the target language must address a range of complex issues that are not easily resolved. It was suggested that, to accurately convey meanings from the source language to the target language, additional explanations are necessary, as target readers may lack sufficient knowledge of proper nouns and their underlying meanings.

Another study by Al-Omar (2013, cited in Elewa, 2015) examined the transliteration of proper nouns from Arabic into English. He highlighted various differences between the two

languages, particularly in consonant and vowel usage. Additional challenges discussed included lexical stress, syllable structure, and structural constraints. Findings indicated that effective transliteration of proper nouns from Arabic to English requires not only a thorough understanding of the language's structural components but also a comprehensive grasp of its phonetic framework, which serves as a fundamental support for this process.

Davydov (2012, cited in Elewa, 2015) examined the translation of the Holy Qur'ān into Maninka, aiming to provide a comprehensive comparison between the two languages. The researcher analyzed various linguistic dimensions, including Qur'ānic terminology, the retention of loanwords, terminologization, the creation of neologisms, derivation by conversion, syntactical aspects, and textual analysis. The findings revealed significant differences between Arabic—the language of the Holy Qur'ān—and the target language, Maninka. Davydov concluded that these differences stemmed from coinage and the broader influence of the Arabic language itself (Davydov, 2012, cited in Elewa, 2015).

Considering the numerous differences between Arabic and English in the context of the Holy Qur'ān, Ghazalah (2004, p. 250) discussed the cultural distinctions between the two languages. He argued that certain cultural elements are highly specific and vary significantly from one language to another. Similarly, in addressing ideological differences, Rezvani and Nouraey (2014) suggested that the greater the linguistic disparities between two languages, the more pronounced the ideological differences and cultural shifts would be.

Overall, the primary focus of previous literature on translation has been to determine whether the meaning of terms rendered in the target text was conveyed accurately. However, the present study aims to take this a step further by examining the differences among translators in their application of strategies when translating proper names in the Holy Qur'ān from Arabic into English. Specifically, it seeks to investigate whether different translators employ similar types of strategies when rendering proper nouns from Arabic to English. In this regard, the study is concerned not only with the accuracy of meaning but also with the translation strategies utilized. With this in mind, the following research questions were posed:

- How did each translator use Chesterman's (1997) strategies in their renditions from Arabic to English?

- Are there any significant differences among the six translators in the application of Chesterman's (1997) strategies to translate Qur'ānic proper names from Arabic into English?

Such a study could hold theoretical significance, as its findings may help assess the applicability of Chesterman's (1997) model to Arabic texts. Furthermore, the results could prove valuable for translators, university instructors, translation students, syllabus designers, and others involved in the field of translation studies.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus of the study

The corpus of the present descriptive-comparative study consisted of proper nouns in Arabic, including names of places, people, and attributes of God in the Holy Qur'ān. The data were collected from the Holy Qur'ān in Arabic and six English translations: Yusuf Ali

(1934), Pickthall (1930), Saffarzadeh (2001), Arberry (1973), Qarai (2003), and Shakir (1993). These translations were among the most well-known and widely used English renditions of the Holy Qur'ān. In addition to these six translations, Noor Comprehensive Commentary Software was employed to provide a more in-depth understanding of the proper nouns in Arabic.

3.2. Data collection procedure

In this study, purposive sampling was used for data collection. Researchers may choose purposive sampling when they specifically target certain corpora or groups that have unique characteristics. In this type of sampling, the corpus is intentionally selected based on its attributes. The primary objective of applying purposive sampling in this study was to gain a deeper understanding of proper nouns in Arabic within the specific Qur'ānic context. To achieve this, 100 proper nouns from the Holy Qur'ān were selected as the corpus to examine the frequencies of strategies used in six different English translations. The strategies were then coded, and the data were analyzed using the model proposed by Chesterman (1997).

3.3. Data analysis procedure

In this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. In the descriptive section, the frequency and percentage of the applied strategies were calculated. In the inferential section, several chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant differences among the translators in their application of strategy types.

3.4. Framework of the study

In the current study, a revised version of Chesterman's (1997) taxonomy for translation strategies was used as the theoretical framework. This model was considered the backbone of the study's framework, as it encompassed 28 strategies, making it a nearly comprehensive model for the translation of proper nouns. However, due to some limitations, several overlapping, redundant, or less relevant strategies, as well as those focusing on the translation of sentences rather than nouns, were excluded. To enhance the comprehensiveness of the framework, two additional strategies were incorporated—one from Farahzad (1995) and another from Newmark (1998). As a result, a revised version of Chesterman's (1997) model, consisting of ten strategies, was established. The strategy types in this revised model were presented as follows:

Literal Translation: According to Chesterman (1997), literal translation involves the translator adhering as closely as possible to the source text form, without necessarily following the source language structure.

Loan Translation: Loan translation refers to borrowing single terms and replicating the structure of the source text, which may be unfamiliar or foreign to the target reader (Chesterman, 1997).

Transposition: A term borrowed by Chesterman (1997) from Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), transposition refers to any change in word class, such as from adjective to noun.

Synonymy: In synonymy, the translator selects the closest alternative term that carries the same meaning but is not the direct literal translation of the source text word or phrase (Chesterman, 1997).

Antonymy: According to Chesterman (1997), in this strategy, the translator uses a word with the opposite meaning, often paired with a negation.

Hyponymy: Hyponymy involves using a member of a larger category (e.g., "rose" is a hyponym in relation to "flower"). Conversely, a hypernym is a related superordinate term that describes the entire category using a broader term (e.g., "flower" is a hypernym in relation to "rose") (Chesterman, 1997).

Paraphrase: Paraphrase involves making a liberal, approximate translation of the source text's meaning, where some lexical items may be modified or omitted (Chesterman, 1997).

Emphasis Change: Chesterman (1997) suggests that this strategy alters, increases, or decreases the emphasis of the thematic focus of the translated text in comparison to the original.

Transliteration: According to Farahzad (1995), transliteration and transcription are used for translating personal proper names. "The former occurs when the letters of the target language reflect the pronunciation of the proper name in the source language, while the latter is the replacement of one letter of the alphabet in the source language (SL) with another letter in the target language (TL)" (p. 43).

Expansion: Expansion involves adding elements in translation to convey additional meaning or clarification (Newmark, 1998).

4. Findings

Regarding the first question on the translators' application of Chesterman's (1997) strategies in their renditions, a key finding was that all six translators used only three of the strategies introduced by Chesterman (1997). In other words, out of the strategies proposed, only three were consistently employed by all six translators when translating the proper nouns of the Holy Qur'ān into English: loan translation, paraphrase, and synonymy. The frequency and percentage of the strategies used by each translator in their renditions are presented in Table 1.

Table1. The frequency and percentage of the strategies proposed by Chesterman (1997) in each translation

Translator / Strategy	Shakir	Saffarzadeh	Qarai	Pickthall	Yusef Ali	Arberry
Loan translation	68 (68%)	68 (68%)	43 (43%)	41 (41%)	41 (41%)	40 (40%)
Paraphrase	16 (16%)	18 (18%)	20 (20%)	21 (21%)	22 (22%)	21 (21%)
Synonymy	16 (16%)	14 (14%)	37 (37%)	38 (38%)	37 (37%)	39 (39%)
Total	100 (100%)	100 (100%)	100 (100%)	100 (100%)	100 (100%)	100 (100%)

Table 1 shows that loan translation was the most frequently used strategy by all six translators. 'Paraphrase' was used minimally by all translators, except for Shakir and Saffarzadeh. Notably, Shakir used both 'paraphrase' and 'synonymy' equally, while Saffarzadeh employed 'paraphrase' more frequently than 'synonymy.' To determine whether there were significant differences among the six translators in their application of Chesterman's (1997) strategies for translating Qur'ānic proper names from Arabic into English, the following findings were revealed.

Table 2. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Shakir

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	68	33.3	54.80	2	0.000
Paraphrase	16	33.3			
Synonymy	16	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 2 show significant differences in the outcomes (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05). This suggests that Shakir applied the three strategies differently. The observed frequencies deviate significantly from the expected ones. The primary strategy used by this translator for translating Qur'ānic proper nouns is 'loan translation,' while the frequencies of applying the other two strategies, 'paraphrase' and 'synonymy,' are equal. In simpler terms, these results indicate that Shakir's use of loan translation is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 3. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Saffarzade

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	68	33.3	54.320	2	0.000
Paraphrase	18	33.3			
Synonymy	14	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 3 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies are significantly different. In other words, Saffarzadeh used the strategy types differently. 'Loan translation' is the primary strategy employed by Saffarzadeh in translating these nouns, while the frequencies for the other two strategies are relatively similar. In simpler terms, these results suggest that the frequency of using loan translation by Saffarzadeh is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 4. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Qarai

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	43	33.3	8.540	2	0.014
Paraphrase	20	33.3			
Synonymy	37	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 4 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.014 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies are significantly different. In other words, Qarai used the strategies differently. Qarai primarily applied 'loan translation' and 'synonymy' in translating proper nouns, but the frequencies with which they were applied vary. In simpler terms, these results suggest that the frequency of using loan translation by Qarai is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 5. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Pickthall

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	41	33.3	6.980	2	0.031
Paraphrase	21	33.3			
Synonymy	38	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 5 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.031 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies are significantly different. In other words, Pickthall applied the strategies differently. Similar to Qarai, Pickthall primarily utilized 'loan translation' and 'synonymy' in translating proper nouns, but the frequencies with which they were applied differ. Therefore, the frequency of using loan translation by Pickthall is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 6. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Yusef Ali

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	41	33.3	6.020	2	0.049
Paraphrase	22	33.3			
Synonymy	37	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 6 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.049 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies are significantly different. In other words, Yusef Ali applied the strategies differently. While 'loan translation' and 'synonymy' are the primary strategies used, the difference in their application by Yusef Ali remains significant. As a result, the frequency of loan translation used by Yusef Ali is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 7. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Arberry

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	41	33.3	6.860	2	0.032
Paraphrase	22	33.3			
Synonymy	37	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 7 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.032 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies differ significantly. In other words, Arberry used the strategies differently. Like the other translators, Arberry primarily applied the 'loan

translation' and 'synonymy' strategies, but the frequencies at which these strategies were applied were significantly different. As a result, the frequency of loan translation used by Arberry is significantly different from what would be expected by chance. In addition to the above tests, a number of chi-square tests were conducted to further explore the significant differences among the six translators in the application of Chesterman's (1997) strategies for translating Qur'ānic proper names from Arabic into English. The results of these tests are presented in the following.

Table 8. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of 'loan translation' by six translators

Strategy/Statistics	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	301	99.9	77.80	2	0.031
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 8 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.031 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequency differs significantly from the expected frequency. Similarly, the translators applied the 'loan translation' strategy in significantly different ways.

Table 9. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of 'paraphrase' by six translators

Strategy/Statistics	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Paraphrase	118	99.9	51.4	2	0.025
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 9 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.025 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies differ significantly. In other words, the translators applied the 'paraphrase' strategy in different ways.

Table 10. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of 'synonymy' by six translators

Strategy/Statistics	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Synonymy	181	99.9	63.4	2	0.015
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 10 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.015 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies differ significantly. In other words, the translators used the 'synonymy' strategy in varying ways. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that all translators applied different strategies in their renditions (1997) with differing frequencies.

5. Discussion

The first research question of the study focused on how each translator applied Chesterman's (1997) strategies in their translations from Arabic to English. The results from various chi-square tests (Tables 2-7) showed that each translator used these strategies with different frequencies and percentages in their renditions of Qur'ānic proper nouns. A closer examination of the Qur'ānic proper nouns analyzed in this study reveals that not only did

the six translators employ different strategies compared to one another, but they also demonstrated individual shifts in strategy use. In fact, each translator relied on a distinct set of strategies from Chesterman's (1997) model to translate the proper nouns. As a result, although it may be necessary, and at times unavoidable, to use different strategies to translate these nouns, frequent shifts between strategies can lead to multiple equivalent terms for a single Arabic word, thus contributing to the existing ambiguity.

While some argue that using different synonyms for a word in the target language helps avoid repetition, as Abu-Mahfouz (2011) points out, the concept of perfect 'synonymy' in language is entirely rejected. An example provided by Abu-Mahfouz (2011) helps clarify this issue. He explains that the term "عزيز" ('Aziz) is translated in various ways, which exacerbates an already complex situation. For instance, Abu-Mahfouz (2011) notes that Arberry (1973) translates it as "The Governor" in verse (30) and "Mighty prince" in verse (78), while Pickthall (undated) translates it as "The ruler" in verse (30) and "ruler of the land" in verse (78) (p. 75).

Furthermore, Abu-Mahfouz (2011) asserts that some linguists convincingly argue that in the Holy Qur'ān, there is no such thing as perfect or complete synonyms. To determine whether two words are synonyms, we would need to consider all possible contexts in which the words might occur, but this is impossible. Therefore, "using different words as an equivalent for the same word in the SL text is, to say the least, confusing and unacceptable in an authoritative text like the Holy Qur'ān and adds to the burden of understanding the translated text" (Abu-Mahfouz, 2011, p. 77). Other studies on divine names in the context of the Holy Qur'ān conclude that properly conveying the meaning of proper nouns from the source language to the target language requires further explanation or translation equivalence, as target readers may lack sufficient knowledge of these proper nouns and their underlying meanings (Asadi Amjad & Farahani, 2013; Al-Sowaid, 2011).

In a study conducted by Abu-Mahfouz (2011, cited in Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015), several problems related to the semantic aspect of translating the Holy Qur'ān from Arabic to English are identified. These include: 1) using a hyponym as an equivalent to a superordinate when the target language (TL) has an equivalent superordinate; 2) using a superordinate as an equivalent to a hyponym when the TL has an equivalent hyponym; 3) translation by transliteration; and 4) inconsistency.

In the current study, a significant issue identified is the inconsistency observed not only among the six translators but also within each individual translator's work. Such inconsistency can lead to the use of different equivalents for a single Qur'ānic term, potentially resulting in misunderstanding, ambiguity, or confusion for the reader. Therefore, great care must be taken when translating proper nouns in the Holy Qur'ān.

The second research question addressed the existence of significant differences among the six translators in their application of Chesterman's (1997) strategies to translate Qur'ānic proper nouns from Arabic into English. The findings revealed that all translators used only three of the ten strategies proposed by Chesterman (1997), namely 'loan translation,' 'paraphrase,' and 'synonymy.' Furthermore, all translators employed 'loan translation' far more frequently than the other strategies. Although 'loan translation' was the most frequently used strategy, the other two strategies were not applied in the same way. According to the results of the chi-square tests, there was a significant difference in the use

of the three strategies—'loan translation,' 'paraphrase,' and 'synonymy'—across the translated versions.

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the proper nouns in the Holy Qur'ān have prompted the use of various translation strategies. This variety in strategy application has led to considerable differences in the English terms used to refer to a single concept in Arabic. For instance, "المؤتكه" is translated as 'the overthrown cities' by Yusef Ali and Qarai, 'Al-mu'tafikah' by Pickthall, 'the city of people of Lut' by Saffarzadeh, and 'the subverted cities' by Arberry. Similarly, the proper name "يحيى" is translated as 'Yahya' by Yusef Ali, Shakir, and Saffarzadeh, and 'John' by Arberry, Qarai, and Pickthall. In this case, some translators used 'loan translation,' while others applied the strategy of 'synonymy.' Such strategy shifts may confuse inexperienced readers of the Holy Qur'ān, leading them to believe that Yahya and John are different individuals. Likewise, rendering the single word "عزيز" ('Aziz') in six different ways—'chief,' 'the great Aziz,' 'ruler,' 'Aziz,' 'chieftain,' and 'governor'—may cause hesitation among readers, who might wonder if all these terms refer to the same Arabic noun.

On the other hand, a consistent set of words is used when the translators apply similar strategies. For example, the term "ملک الموت" is translated into English as 'death's angel' or 'the angel of death' because all six translators employed the 'paraphrase' strategy to render this term into English. Similarly, the term "زبور" is consistently translated as 'Psalm' by all the translators through the strategy of 'synonymy.' There are also instances where slight variations in the applied equivalents do not lead to significant differences in meaning. For instance, the term "جنّت" is translated through 'paraphrase' using expressions such as 'garden dense' by Shakir, 'garden luxurious' by Yusef Ali, 'garden of thick/crowded foliage' by Pickthall and Saffarzadeh, and 'garden of luxuriant' by Arberry. Similarly, the term "روح القدس" is translated by all translators through 'paraphrase' as 'The Holy Spirit' in English.

Applying different words to refer to a single Arabic term, if not considered outright wrong, could still be confusing for readers who may switch between various translations. While differences in how these proper nouns are rendered across languages are a common issue, the deviation in translation methods can create confusion for ordinary readers. This conclusion is supported by Saffarzadeh (2001), who argues that the greatest values of the Holy Qur'ān—specifically, the Divine Names known as Asmā ul Hosnā in Arabic—have often been inadequately translated by many commentators and translators. This issue has contributed to confusion and highlighted the incompleteness of the meanings conveyed by words used to render these Qur'ānic proper nouns and concepts. Saffarzadeh maintains that "any translation void of attention to these meanings, which usually confirm and complete each verse, loses a substantial part of its validity" (Saffarzadeh, 2001, p. 1542). Therefore, it can be concluded that not only the meaning of these words is crucial for their translation into the target language, but the strategies employed also play a critical role in ensuring the accuracy and correctness of the translated terms.

5. Conclusions

This research provides valuable comparative insights into the most widely used English translations of the proper nouns in the Holy Qur'ān. Based on the findings of the study, it was observed that the 'loan translation' strategy was the most frequently applied by the translators. Following this, 'synonymy' ranked second and 'paraphrase' ranked third.

Regarding the individual renditions of each translator, it was found that 'loan translation' was the most frequently used strategy by all three translators. Meanwhile, 'paraphrase' was the least frequently used, with all translators except Saffarzadeh and Shakir employing it. Saffarzadeh used both 'paraphrase' and 'synonymy' equally, while Shakir used more 'paraphrase' than 'synonymy.' This suggests that all six translators applied only three of the strategies outlined in Chesterman's (1997) model. Finally, 'loan translation' and 'synonymy' ranked as the second and third most frequently used strategy types, respectively, by all translators except for Saffarzadeh and Shakir.

To examine the types of strategies used by the six translators in the English translation of proper Arabic nouns in the Holy Qur'ān, it was found that all translators employed three strategies: 'loan translation,' 'paraphrase,' and 'synonymy.' All translators used 'loan translation' far more frequently than the other two strategies. However, with the exception of Shakir, who used 'paraphrase' and 'synonymy' equally, and Saffarzadeh, who used 'paraphrase' more than 'synonymy,' all other translators preferred 'synonymy' over 'paraphrase.'

Since the proper nouns in the Holy Qur'ān were translated using different strategies by the translators, there is a wide variety of English terms used to refer to a single Arabic word. This inconsistency could be confusing for readers and may lead to misinterpretation. The results further indicate that each translator might arbitrarily apply a range of available strategies to translate proper nouns. Such inconsistencies can result in multiple English equivalents for a single Arabic term, which could contribute to the ongoing ambiguity.

The findings of the present study may have various implications. The results could be theoretically significant, as they can be used to assess the applicability of Chesterman's (1997) model to Arabic texts. Furthermore, the model's suitability for comparative studies (Arabic text versus English text) can also be examined. This study may also serve as a valuable resource for familiarizing students with applicable translation strategies. Additionally, the inconsistencies observed in the translations of individual translators highlight the need for more systematic translation education and careful considerations prior to translating religious texts. The findings are also important because they provide clear evidence of the challenges translators in the field of religious studies may face when applying each framework or model. Understanding these potential issues can assist translators who plan to use these models in their work. To address these challenges, Abdul-Raof (2001) recommended that Qur'ān translators need "an advanced knowledge in Arabic syntax and rhetoric in order to appreciate the complex linguistic and rhetorical patterns of Qur'ānic structures" (p. 2).

The study is also pedagogically significant. Translators, university instructors, translation students, syllabus designers, and others involved in the field could benefit from the findings of this study. The results may encourage language teachers to adopt a more systematic approach when planning their translation programs. Additionally, the findings can assist teachers in structuring their lesson plans more effectively by providing them with insights into the problem areas that may arise when translating the proper nouns of the Holy Qur'ān. Syllabus designers can also utilize the results of this study to revise textbooks and syllabi for translation courses. Additionally, policymakers in the fields of language and translation can benefit from this research. The study highlights the role that considering different translation strategies plays in rendering proper nouns into other languages. This research is especially valuable for those seeking deeper knowledge, as it helps them place the differences in translations and meanings in proper perspective. Furthermore, policymakers

in education can use the findings to inform their decision-making processes. By doing so, they can help reduce confusion and frustration among readers, fostering a better understanding and appreciation of the works produced by various translators. Finally, this study may be considered as an important step to encourage translation teachers and learners in our country to have more active roles in their translation process via implementing each model.

Despite the valuable insights provided by the study, like any other research, it has some limitations, a few of which are outlined here. Due to time constraints, only one hundred proper nouns and names from the Holy Qur'ān were analyzed; with a larger corpus, more generalizable results could be obtained. Additionally, because of the limited time, the study was unable to explore the reasons behind the inconsistencies among different translators and within individual translators. With more time, more conclusive results could have been drawn, and the sources of these differences could have been more thoroughly investigated. Furthermore, this study did not focus on identifying the one translation that could be considered the best or most reliable in terms of the paradigms of interpretations and translations of the Qur'ānic proper nouns and names.

Considering the above points, several potential areas for future research can be explored. First, various specialists may apply different models to the same set of data to assess the applicability and effectiveness of each model. Second, researchers could examine other variables, such as translators' gender, background, experience, and ideology, as intervening factors to investigate how these elements influence the application of translation strategies. Third, further studies could be conducted to analyze issues related to translating linguistic phenomena such as polysemy, antonymy, metonymy, collocations, and lexical ambiguity in the Holy Qur'ān. Finally, this research could be extended not only to Arabic and English but also to Arabic and other genetically unrelated languages, offering a broader perspective on the challenges of translation.

References

Abdelaal, N. M., & Rashid, S. M. D. (2015). Semantic loss in the Holy Qur'ān translation with special reference to Surah Al-Waqi'ah (The Event Inevitable). *SAGE Open, 5*(4), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015605880

Abu-Mahfouz, A. (2011). Some issues in translating nouns in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur'ān. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literature, 3*(1), 65–83.

Al-Omar, N. A. (2013). Transliterating proper nouns: Facts and implications. *Linguistics, Culture & Education, 2*(2), 119–132.

Al-Sowaidi, B. S. A. (2011). *Textuality in near-synonyms translations of the Holy Qurʾān into English* [Doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape].

Al-Yahya, M., Al-Khalifa, H., Bahanshal, A., Al-Odah, I., & Al-Helwah, N. (2010). An ontological model for representing semantic lexicons: An application on time nouns in the Holy Qur'ān. *Arabian Journal for Science and Engineering, 35*(2), 21–30.

Arberry, A. J. (1973). *The Koran interpreted*. Macmillan.Macmillan Company"). No location provided, as APA 7th edition omits publisher locations.

Arberry, A. J. (1980). *The Koran interpreted*. George Allen & Unwin.

Asadi Amjad, F., & Farahani, M. (2013). Problems and strategies in English translation of Qur'ānic divine names. *International Journal of Linguistics, 5*(1), 128–142. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v5i1.3301

Chesterman, A. (1997). *Memes of translation: The spread of ideas in translation theory*. John Benjamins.

Davydov, A. (2012). On Souleymane Kanté's translation of the Qur'ān into the Maninka language. *Mandenkan, 48*, 3–20.

Dickins, J., Hervey, S. G. J., & Higgins, I. (2002). *Thinking Arabic translation: A course in translation method: Arabic to English*. Routledge.

Elewa, A. (2015). Semantic strategies of translating cultural-specific terms: Arabic/English. *International Journal of Linguistics, 7*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v7i1.7110

Farahzad, F. (1995). *Translating advanced English text*. Payame Noor University.

Hervey, S., & Higgins, I. (1992). *Thinking translation: A course in translation methods*. Routledge.

Newmark, P. (1988). *Approaches to translation*. Prentice Hall.

Mirza Suzani, S. (2008). Translation of proper names: Problems and approaches. *Translation Studies, 6*(21), 7–24.

Mirza Suzani, S. (2009). *Translation of simple texts (Tarjomeye motune sade)*. SAMT.

Mirza Suzani, S. (2023). Analyzing translation strategies for Allah's attributes in the Holy Qur'ān. *International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies, 1*(3), 293–306. https://doi.org/10.22081/ttais.2024.67907.1019

Moradi, M., & Sadeghi, H. M. (2014). Translation of culture-specific phrases in the Holy Qur'ān. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 4*(8), 1735–1746.

Noor Comprehensive Commentary Collection. (2010). [DVD-ROM]. Computer Research Center of Islamic Sciences.

Pickthall, M. (1990). *The meaning of the glorious Qur'ān*. Kitab Bhavan.

Qarai, A. (2003). *The Qur'ān with an English paraphrase*. Center for Translation of Holy Qur'ān.

Rezvani, R., & Nouraey, P. (2014). A comparative study of shifts in English translations of the Qur'ān: A case study on "Yusuf" chapter. *Khazar Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences, 17*(1), 70–87.

Saffarzadeh, M. (2001). *The Holy Qur'ān: English and Persian translation with commentary*. Honar Bidari.

Shakir, M. (1993). *Holy Quran*. Ansaryan Publications.

Yusuf Ali, A. (1996). *The meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*. Kitab Bhavan.

International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies

Journal homepage: http://ttais.akhs.bou.ac.ir/

A Comparative Analysis of English Translations of Idioms in Selected Verses of Surah al-Mumtaḥanah (The Woman Tested) and Surah al-Saff (The Ranks) Based on Schleiermacher's Framework

Mohammad Yazdani[1*], Mahsa Raeisi Sattari[1]

1. Department of English Language, Imam Reza International University, Mashhad, Iran

* Corresponding author: mohammadyazdaniets@gmail.com

https://doi.org/10.22081/ttais.2025.70208.1042

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: 2 November 2023
Revised: 21 November 2023
Accepted: 11 March 2024

Keywords:
Qur'ānic figurative language,
Qur'ānic idioms,
Qur'ānic rhetorical devices,
Schleiermacher's framework,
Translation quality assessment.

ABSTRACT

Islam, as the final and most comprehensive religion, offers a divine plan for a purposeful and prosperous life. It has continued to spread through the Glorious Qur'ān and the Straight Path of Ahlul-Bayt, divine peace be upon them. When reading the Qur'ān, figurative language often presents challenges, as readers may encounter ambiguity in understanding its message and religious teachings. Therefore, the accurate translation of Qur'ānic idioms is of utmost importance. However, existing English translations sometimes diverge from the source text, with idiomatic expressions being a key source of such discrepancies. Thus, comparing different translations of Qur'ānic idioms based on scientific principles of translation is essential. This study examines the interpretations and English translations of idioms found in verse 12 of Surah al-Mumtaḥanah and verse 8 of Surah al-Saff in the Noble Qur'ān. To achieve this, translations by prominent scholars were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring a variety of translation methods. Seventeen translations were analyzed for Surah al-Ṣaff and thirteen for Surah al-Mumtaḥanah. Given the descriptive nature of this research, the study aimed to identify and explain the methods used by these translators. The theoretical foundation of this research is based on Friedrich Schleiermacher's (2012) translation methods, followed by an evaluation of the translations using Waddington's (2001) holistic model of translation quality assessment. Finally, based on the observed strengths and weaknesses of the translations, new versions of the verses were proposed, designed to be more comprehensible and appealing to younger generations.

How to cite this article: Yazdani, M. and Raeisi Sattari, M. (2024). A Comparative Analysis of English Translations of Idioms in Selected Verses of Surah al-Mumtaḥanah (The Woman Tested) and Surah al-Saff (The Ranks) Based on Schleiermacher's Framework. *International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies*, *2*(2), 203-226. doi: 10.22081/ttais.2025.70208.1042

1. Introduction

The Noble Qur'ān is a divine book of guidance, revealed by Allah, Jalla Jalaaluhu, to lead humanity. As it is not limited to a specific nation, it must be translated into all languages of the world. However, the presence of complex figures of speech, idiomatic expressions, and multiple layers of meaning makes translation a challenging task. Figurative language serves as an effective tool for enhancing brevity, expanding linguistic expression, and stimulating imagination (Abdelaziz, 2018, p. 9). Additionally, rhetorical elements play a crucial role in utilizing figures of speech, strengthening expressiveness, creating vivid and emphatic effects, and evoking deep contemplation and emotional responses in the audience.

The Collins Cobuild English Dictionary defines figurative language as "the skill or art of using language effectively" (Forsyth, 2014, p. 1427). In his translation, The Message of the Qur'ān, Asad describes the Noble Qur'ān as "unique and untranslatable," emphasizing that the profound organic interconnection between its meaning and linguistic expression forms an inseparable whole (Asad, 1980, p. v).

Others, such as Iqbal, argue that the Glorious Qur'ān is an untranslatable text. However, despite this, numerous translations of this divine book exist in various languages. Each translation is influenced by the translator's financial and socio-political circumstances, as well as their intellectual and spiritual perspectives (Iqbal, 2004, pp. 281-296). Abdul-Raof (2001) asserts that the translation of the Holy Qur'ān should not be seen as a substitute for the original Arabic text, emphasizing that "we cannot produce a Latin Qur'ān, no matter how accurate or professional the translator attempts to be" (p. 28).

Abdul-Raof (2001) presents two key reasons. First, Qur'ānic expressions and structures "cannot be reproduced in an equivalent manner to the original in terms of structure, mystical effect on the reader, and intentionality of the source text" (p. 28). Second, the divine nature of the Noble Qur'ān as the Word of Allah "cannot be reproduced by the word of man" (p. 28). Abdul-Raof emphasizes that "the beauty of the Qur'ān-specific language and style surpasses man's faculty to reproduce the Qur'ān in a translated form" (Abdul-Raof, 2001, pp. 1-2).

Similarly, Pickthall underscores that an English translation of the Qur'ān "is not the Glorious Qur'ān: that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move humans to tears and ecstasy. Translation is only a small attempt to present part of the meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān—and, peradventure, something of the charm in English. It can, therefore, never take the place of the Noble Qur'ān in the original Arabic, nor is it meant to do so" (Pickthall, 1999, p. vii).

However, Manafi Anari argues that although much of the divine instruction and the exquisitely unique style of the Holy Qur'ān are lost in translation, a careful and precise translation can still serve as a means for the target language (TL) audience to gain insight into Allah's revelations (Manafi Anari, 2003, p. 35). This study is a semantic-pragmatic analysis that examines Schleiermacher's translation approaches to assess 17 translations of selected Qur'ānic idioms. The translations are evaluated using Waddington's holistic model, and ultimately, more comprehensible translations of five Qur'ānic idioms are proposed for the younger generation.

In today's era of globalization, modern communication technology has brought the world's cultures closer together, making them more accessible. As a result, writers must

address a universal audience with universally understood features, which enhances the translatability of texts. The primary objectives of this study are to analyze Schleiermacher's translation approaches in 17 translations of two key Qur'ānic idioms, evaluate these translations using Waddington's holistic model, and ultimately propose clearer, more comprehensible translations for the younger generation, based on the identified strengths and weaknesses of the existing translations.

This study investigates diverse translations of the Qur'ān to identify strategies for improving the quality of religious translation, with a specific focus on the rhetorical structures and figurative language inherent in the Qur'ānic text. The ultimate aim is to offer a deeper understanding of Qur'ānic idioms and their intended semantic import.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Previous Research

Numerous studies have explored Qur'ānic figures of speech, examining various aspects of this subject. Koorani (2012) analyzed the strategies used by Iranian lexicographers when translating proverbs, as well as the most frequently applied strategies in bilingual English-Persian dictionaries, including *Hezareh* (The Millennium) and *Pooya*. Heidarzadeh (2016) investigated fifty Qur'ānic proverbs, focusing on the rhetorical devices employed in each. Khalaf (2016), in his study *Translation of Explicit Qur'ānic Proverbs and Their Rhetorics into English*, conducted a comparative analysis of four English translations of the Glorious Qur'ān.

His research examined these translations from linguistic, literary, and translational perspectives to highlight the creativity and rhetorical depth of Qur'ānic proverbs. The corpus of his study consisted of 52 Qur'ānic proverbs.

Zolfaghari (2008) defined the concept of 'Kenāyeh' and clarified the distinctions between 'Kenāyeh,' 'Ḍarb-ul-Mathal,' metonymy, and metaphor. He also provided criteria to differentiate these figures of speech. Additionally, Nasiri (2014) analyzed 16 Qur'ānic verses containing Kenāyeh and examined the functions of this figure of speech in the Noble Qur'ān. Khaleghian (2014) explored the possibility of transferring the sound devices of the Holy Qur'ān into English, both in poetic and non-poetic translations.

Her study focused specifically on the sound devices in Chapter 30 of the Qur'ān. She compared three types of translations: poetic translation by Nikayin, stylistic translation by Arberry, and explanatory translation by Yusuf Ali.

Aldahesh (2014), in his work, provided a comprehensive overview of untranslatability as a key concept in translation studies, with a particular focus on the issue of the Glorious Qur'ān's untranslatability. He first explored the concept of untranslatability as addressed by linguists and translation theorists. He then examined various perspectives offered by Muslim intellectuals regarding the untranslatability of the Qur'ān, and finally, he analyzed the views of prominent English translators of the Noble Qur'ān on this matter.

Al-Badrani (2013) studied the translation of the word "'Asa" in the Glorious Qur'ān into English. He reviewed how different translators had rendered the term and, based on established Qur'ānic interpretations, proposed corrections to the translations of the selected verses.

2.2. Translation Strategies in the Context of Qur'ān Translation

A deeper exploration into the history of translation methods reveals two primary approaches for translating Qur'ānic idioms: literal and free translation. In the literal approach, the unit of translation is typically the word or sentence. In the free approach, the translator focuses on the meaning of the Qur'ānic utterances and their application in the target language, or may offer interpretations of the Qur'ānic idioms. Historically, we find that Jerome and Cicero rejected word-for-word translation in favor of sense-for-sense translation (Munday, 2016, p. 31).

Vinay and Darbelnet framework for translation strategies distinguishes between two primary approaches: direct and oblique translation. Direct translation encompasses three procedures: borrowing, calque, and literal translation. Oblique translation comprises four procedures: transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. (Munday, 2016, pp. 88-91). Baker (1992, pp. 72-78) outlines several strategies for translating idioms, which can be summarized as follows:

- Using an idiom of similar meaning and form: This involves finding an idiom in the target language that closely matches the meaning and structure of the source language idiom.

- Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form: In this case, the translator seeks an idiom in the target language that conveys the same meaning as the source language idiom, but uses a different structure or wording.

- Paraphrasing: This strategy involves explaining the meaning of the idiom in plain language, often resulting in a loss of the figurative or idiomatic nuance.

- Omission: If an idiom has no close equivalent in the target language and paraphrasing is impractical or awkward, the translator may choose to omit the idiom altogether.

According to Newmark (1988, pp. 284-5), semantic and communicative translation are the two primary approaches to translation. When translating the Holy Qur'ān, he emphasizes the importance of selecting a strategy that avoids:

- Distorting or losing the original meaning: This refers to ensuring the translation accurately reflects the source text's meaning and avoids misinterpretations.

- Overtranslation: This occurs when the translator adds unnecessary details or explanations not present in the original text.

- Undertranslation: This describes a translation that is too general or lacks the specific details and nuances of the original text.

As Munday explains, House (2014, p. 45) developed her model based on a comparative ST–TT analysis, which involves assessing translation quality by identifying 'mismatches' or 'errors'. The steps in this process are as follows:

- A profile of the ST register is created, including a description of the ST genre.

- The function of the ST, including both ideational and interpersonal aspects, is identified.

- The same process is then applied to the TT.

- The TT profile is compared with the ST profile, and errors are identified.

- Errors related to register and genre are referred to as 'covertly erroneous errors', while denotative mismatches, such as grammatical or lexical errors, are classified as 'overtly erroneous errors.'

- Finally, the translation is categorized as either 'overt translation' or 'covert translation'.

Schleiermacher identified two possible approaches 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, 2004, p. 49). He refers to these two approaches as alienation and naturalization, respectively.

Baker, on the other hand, suggests the following strategies for translating idioms:

- Using an idiom with a similar meaning and form.

- Using an idiom with a similar meaning but a different form.

- Paraphrasing, where the expression is often simplified to its basic sense, leading to translation loss.

- Omission, if the idiom has no close equivalent and paraphrasing is either difficult or results in a clumsy style (Baker, 1992, pp. 72-78).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Procedure

In this study, a descriptive-comparative method was used to analyze and interpret how a specific idiom is handled by different translators. The research relied on library studies and manual idiom extraction techniques. The procedure for conducting the study was as follows. First, books, articles, and theses on Qur'ānic figures of speech were consulted to compile a list of Qur'ānic verses containing figurative language. Second, Qur'ānic idioms were identified from this list based on their rhetorical definitions provided by experts, as discussed in other sections of the article.

Third, a selection of thirteen English translations from Surah al-Mumtaḥanah and seventeen from Surah al-Ṣaff was prepared, sourced from www.tanzil.net, to be analyzed according to Schleiermacher's translation theory and Waddington's TQA model. Fourth, Arabic source books were used to examine the literary meanings of Arabic figurative expressions with similar counterparts in English.

Fifth, Persian and Arabic exegesis books on the Noble Qur'ān were consulted to determine the authoritative interpretations of prominent exegetes concerning the selected Qur'ānic idioms. Sixth, the English translations of the Qur'ān available on Tanzil.net were reviewed and compared. The translations rendered by the selected translators were analyzed according to Schleiermacher's framework and Waddington's TQA model. Finally, the analysis of the selected English translations was completed, with strengths and weaknesses identified. Based on this, two suggestions were offered for the idioms, drawing on Schleiermacher's two approaches, in order to produce a higher-quality and more fluent translation for the intended audience.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

Schleiermacher's model of translation (2012) has been used as the theoretical framework of the study. Naturalization and Alienation are two translation extremes that he used to analyze translations both as product and process. Waddington's model of translation quality assessment (Model C) was also applied to mark the translations based on the degree of 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 (Schleiermacher, 2012)

Level	Accuracy of ST content transfer	Quality of expression in the 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 Translations of Qur'ānic Idioms (60:12).

The following ayah (verse) was analyzed: **"**وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ". The above verse was descended at the time when Holy Prophet Muhammad (divine peace upon him and his Household) came to Mecca and the believers came for allegiance. The following verse concerns the allegiance of believing women, according to which, the believing women pledged not to commit a number of sins, including killing their children out of the fear of poverty, committing adultery, becoming pregnant illegitimately, slandering, etc.

The following verse refers to one of the sins that the believing women promised not to commit (Mughniya, 2004, p. 307).

Table 2. Translations of Qur'ānic idioms (60:12)

وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ		
1	Ahmed Ali	nor accuse others for what they have fabricated themselves
2	Ahmed Raza Khan	nor bring the lie that they carry between their hands and feet
3	Arberry	nor bring a calumny they forge between their hands and their feet
4	Asad	and would not indulge in slander, falsely devising it out of nothingness
5	Helali & Khan	that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood (i.e. by making illegal children belonging to their husbands)
6	Maududi	that they will not bring forth a calumny between their hands and feet
7	Pickthall	nor produce any lie that they have devised between their hands and feet
8	Qarai	nor utter any slander that they may have intentionally fabricated
9	Qaribullah & Darwish	nor fabricate slander between their hands and their feet
10	Sahih International	nor will they bring forth a slander they have invented between their arms and legs
11	Sarwar	or to bring false charges against anyone (such as ascribing others children to their husbands)
12	Shakir	and will not bring a calumny which they have forged of themselves
13	Yusuf Ali	that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood

Interpretational Analysis: Based on the Qur'ānic exegeses referenced, most translations offer similar interpretations of the selected verse.

Exegeses-Based Definitions

Al-Mizān Exegesis explains that this verse advises believing women to avoid becoming pregnant illegitimately and falsely attributing the child to their husbands. This act is considered a sin, involving both lying and slander, committed through their own actions (Tabatabai, 1974, p. 242).

The Kāshif Exegesis suggests that the verse refers to women's wombs, which are metaphorically located between their hands and feet. It further explains that women should not deceive their husbands by falsely claiming pregnancy or by engaging in illicit pregnancies and attributing them to their husbands (Mughniya, 2004, p. 307).

Aḥsan al-Ḥadīth exegesis was also referred to: the verse also alludes to childbirth, where the child emerges between a woman's feet, which is why the reference is made to feet in the verse (Qurashi, 2012, p. 133).

Summation: As evident from the interpretations provided, despite varying reasons, the core meaning of this verse revolves around 'women committing adultery and falsely accusing their husbands of this occurrence'.

Linguistic Analysis: The analysis has been displayed in Tables 3 and 4. According to Table 3, with the translations using the alienating method listed, there are four key terms in the verse. The translations of these four key terms vary from one translator to another. The first term is 'ya'tīna bi', for which the translators have used five different equivalents.

Almaany Arabic English Dictionary defines this verb as 'advance, bring, bring forward, present, introduce, produce' (Almaany, n.d.).

Hans Wehr Arabic English Dictionary, on the other hand, mentions the following equivalents for this verb: 'to bring, bring forward, produce, advance, accomplish, do, perform, carry out, execute, offer, commit' (Cowan, 1976).

Table 3. Translations Employing Alienating Method

أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ	يفْتَرِينَهُ	بُهْتَانٍ	يَأْتِينَ بِ	كلمه
between their hands and feet	carry	lie	bring	between their hands and feet
between their arms and legs	forge	calumny	utter	between their arms and legs
	fabricate	falsehood	produce	
	devise	slander	bring forth	
	invent	False charges	fabricate	

Table 4. Translations Employing Naturalizing Method

يفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ	وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ
they have fabricated themselves	nor accuse others
falsely devising it out of nothingness	and would not indulge in slander
intentionally forging falsehood (i.e., by making illegal children belonging to their husbands)	or to bring false charges against anyone (such as ascribing others children to their husbands)
as to parenthood	nor commit perjury
which they have forged of themselves	nor utter any slander
intentionally inventing falsehoods	and will not bring a calumny

Dictionary-Based Analyses: The Longman Contemporary Dictionary defines "fabricate" as "to invent a story or piece of information to deceive someone" (Longman, 2014). However, the challenge lies in finding the most appropriate collocation for the term "Buhtān," which is our second key concept. According to the first table, translators have used four different equivalents for this notion, including "lie," "calumny," "falsehood," and "slander".

The most accurate approach is to refer to the Longman Dictionary and identify verbs that commonly collocate with these four nouns, while also capturing the intended meaning of the verse (Longman, 2014). According to this dictionary, the noun "lie" pairs with several verbs, with "tell," "give," and "spread" being the most compatible with the meaning of the source text.

Since "slander" can be used both as a noun and a verb, when it appears in a clause, we prefer using the verb form rather than the noun, followed by another verb. According to the *Longman Dictionary*, "calumny" and "falsehood" are typically used as nouns and rarely collocate with other verbs (Longman, 2014). The *Almaany Dictionary* defines the noun "Buhtān" as "aspersion, calumny, defamation, fabrication, false accusation, falsehood, falsity, lie, slander, traducement, untruth, vilification" (Almaany, n.d.). Similarly, the *Hans Wehr Dictionary* lists "slander", "false accusation", "lie" and "untruth" as equivalents for "Buhtān" (Cowan, 1976).

As for the third key term— 'Yaftarīnahū'—the *Almaany Dictionary* suggests using terms such as "fabricate," "lie," "aspersion," "calumny," "false accusation," "falsehood," "slander," and others (Almaany, n.d.). *Hans Wehr* also lists the following equivalents for the simple form of 'Yaftarīnahū': "to fabricate/invent" (Cowan, 1976). To understand how native speakers use the concept of slander, we need to refer again to the *Longman Dictionary* to see which verbs collocate with terms like "calumny," "slander," and "lie" to accurately convey the meaning of the verse (Longman, 2014). According to the first table, translators have used five verbs for the verb 'Yaftarīnahū': "forge," "carry," "invent," "devise," and "fabricate." We now need to examine the meanings of these five verbs to determine which one best fits the context of the verse.

The *Longman Dictionary* defines these five verbs as follows (Longman, 2014):

- **'Forge'**: The second definition of this verb aligns more closely with the meaning of the verse: "to illegally copy something, especially something printed or written, to make people think it is real."

- **'Devise'**: "To plan or invent a new way of doing something."

- **'Fabricate'**: "To invent a story or piece of information in order to deceive someone."

- **'Invent'** (second meaning): "To think of an idea or story, etc., that is not true, usually to deceive people."

- **'Carry'**: Those translators who used "carry" may have referred to the rest of the verse, which addresses carrying an illegitimate child in the womb, or it could refer to the lie they tell their husbands, for which they are responsible.

The final key phrase is ‘bayna aydīhinna wa arjulihinna’. The literal translation of this phrase could be “between their hands and feet,” which refers to the illegitimate child within the womb, as the womb is located between the upper and lower parts of the body. Alternatively, it could be translated as “between their arms and legs” to indicate the illegitimate child when held in the mother's embrace or lying at her feet.

According to the second table, six different naturalizing translations are provided for the verse. These translators divide the verse into two parts and offer naturalizing translations for each. The first part addresses the concept of slandering, while the second part refers to the lie they tell and the illegitimate child they bear.

For the first part of the verse, the following verbs are used: ‘accuse, indulge in slander, bring false charges, commit perjury, utter slander, bring a calumny’. To ensure the accuracy of these translations, we can refer to the Longman Dictionary (Longman, 2014):

- Accuse: “To say that you believe someone is guilty of a crime or of doing something wrong.”

- Indulge in: “To allow yourself to do or have something that you enjoy, especially something considered bad for you.”

- False charges: “A written or spoken statement blaming someone for doing something wrong or illegal.”

- Perjury: “The crime of telling a lie after promising to tell the truth in a court of law, or a lie told in this manner.”

Regarding the second part of the verse, the following phrases are used: ‘fabricated themselves, falsely devising it out of nothingness, forging falsehood, as to parenthood, forged of themselves, inventing falsehoods.’ These translations emphasize the act of creating or inventing a falsehood or lie.

All of these terms have been clarified above, except for the following two:

- *‘As to parenthood’* refers to the false charges made by women against their husbands regarding their parenthood, when in fact they were not the parents.

- *‘Out of nothingness’* refers to the lie told to the men about being the real father, when they were not. In other words, the women accused the men without any basis in reality.

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

Translations Employing the Alienating Method: Table 4 further above shows that Ahmed Raza Khan, Arberry, Pickthall, and Sahih International have fully adopted the alienating method of translation. However, determining whether the translation method used for the verse under study is fully alienating, mostly alienating/naturalizing, or fully naturalizing largely depends on the second part of the verse. For the first part, both naturalizing and alienating translations tend to be similar. The translators who employed the alienating method did not offer idiomatic translations.

In other words, they did not replace the Arabic idiom with its English counterpart, if one exists. Among the thirteen translators, Qaribullah & Darwish and Maududi offer translations that differ from the others. While the verse contains two Arabic verbs, these translators opted to use a single verb that encapsulates the meaning of both verbs simultaneously. As a result, their translations are shorter than those of the other translators.

These two translators did not adopt a fully alienating approach, as some words in the verse were not consistently translated into a more natural structure. Therefore, it can be argued that Qaribullah & Darwish and Maududi employed a "mostly alienating" method.

Translations Employing Naturalizing Method. Ahmed Ali, Asad, Helali & Khan, Qarai, Sarwar, Shakir, and Yusuf Ali are among the translators who used the absolutely naturalizing method. The second part of the verse requires additional explanation beyond the translation to convey the full meaning, otherwise the message may be unclear, leaving the reader confused.

Some translators, such as Helali and Khan and Sarwar, included extra clarification within their translations, while others did not. In the case of these two translators, they translated only the first part of the verse, offering further explanation in brackets for the second part. Like the other group, their translations do not feature idiomatic expressions.

4.2. Assessment of Translations of Qur'ānic Idioms (60:12).

The quality of the translation of this verse "وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ" was assessed.

Alienating/Naturalizing Methods: For the translation of this Qur'ānic verse, Ahmed Raza Khan, Arberry, Pickthall, and Sahih International employed the absolutely alienating method. The idiom in the second part of this verse is particularly challenging, as it may be difficult for the translator to convey both the meaning and the intended message without resorting to naturalizing translation or providing additional explanation. In other words, the reader may not fully grasp the verse's implications by merely relying on the denotative meanings of the words used.

All the aforementioned translators rendered this verse literally, using phrases like "between their hands and feet" or "arms and legs" to refer to the concept of becoming pregnant. Structures such as "bringing forth a slander/calumny that they have invented/fabricated between their arms and legs" may sound unnatural and confusing to people from different cultures, as the idea of "becoming pregnant illegitimately" is not typically expressed this way in English.

In fact, this method of translation may not be clear to the target reader without further clarification. Since the Holy Qur'ān was revealed to guide us in leading the best life and to warn us against evil deeds, it should be translated in a manner that clearly conveys the Word of Allah. If the meaning of the verse is not easily understood by the reader, then what is the point of translating the Glorious Qur'ān?

Maududi and Qaribullah and Darwish primarily employed the alienating method, with their translations being similar to those using the completely alienating approach. The only distinction is that Maududi, along with Qaribullah & Darwish, did not restrict themselves to maintaining the exact word count of the original verse.

On the other hand, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Sarwar, Qarai, Helali & Khan, Asad, and Ahmed Ali all used the completely naturalizing method. Among them, Helali & Khan and Sarwar are the only two translators who explicitly clarified the main message of the idiom within brackets. Helali & Khan translated it as "by making illegal children belonging to their husbands," while Sarwar used the phrase "such as ascribing others' children to their husband". This approach ensures that the reader fully understands the meaning Allah intends when referring to a calumny brought between one's hands and feet.

Shakir, Yusuf Ali, Qarai, Ahmed Ali, and Asad did not address the concept of illegitimate pregnancy. While their translations follow the naturalizing method and literally translate the phrase "between their hands and feet", their translations remain unclear. They only refer to the falsehood that some people intentionally invent.

Asad, in particular, used the phrase "out of nothingness", which does not accurately capture the meaning of the Arabic word "Yaftarīnahū". Based on the analysis of verse (60:12), two translators employed the mostly alienating method, six used the absolutely alienating method, and nine followed the absolutely naturalizing method.

4.4. Analysis of translations of Qur'ānic idioms (61:8)

The following selection of verse was analyzed: يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ. The verses of the Holy Qur'ān serve as a means of guidance and prosperity for humanity.

Content Analysis: This particular verse addresses the atheists who sought to obliterate this guidance and prevent people from receiving the Word of Allah with their unjust words. However, they failed to realize that not only will the religion of Allah, Jalla Jalaaluh, never perish, but it will indeed spread across the entire world. They labeled the Glorious Qur'ān as magic and sought to diminish its influence on the hearts of people, thereby hindering their spiritual growth.

Yet, the Noble Qur'ān is a sun that illuminates and revitalizes the world, while the atheists saw it merely as a feeble, fleeting candle, whose light they believed could be extinguished by a mere puff of air. Their futile attempts are highlighted and criticized in this verse, emphasizing that the light of Allah is inextinguishable (Hosseini Hamedani, 2001, p. 329).

Translational Analysis

Table 5. Translations of Qur'ānic Idioms (61:8)

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ		
1	Ahmed Ali	They want to extinguish the light of God by uttering blasphemies. But God wills to perfect His light
2	Ahmed Raza Khan	They wish to put out Allah's light with their mouths, whereas Allah will perfect His light
3	Arberry	They desire to extinguish with their mouths, the light of God; but God will perfect His light
4	Asad	They aim to extinguish God's light with their utterances: but God has willed to spread His light in all its fullness
5	Daryabadi	Fain would they extinguish the light of Allah is with their mouths and Allah is going to perfect His light
6	Helali & Khan	They intend to put out the Light of Allah (i.e. the religion of Islam, this Qur'ān, and Prophet Muhammad SAW) with their mouths. But Allah will complete His Light
7	Itani	They want to extinguish God's Light with their mouths; but God will complete His Light
8	Maududi	They seek to extinguish Allah's light (by blowing) with their mouths, but Allah shall spread His light in all its fullness
9	Mubarak Puri	They intend to put out the Light of Allah with their mouths. But Allah will bring His Light to perfection
10	Pickthall	Fain would they put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light
11	Qarai	They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light
12	Qaribullah & Darwish	They seek to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths; but Allah will complete His Light
13	Sahih International	They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light
14	Sarwar	They want to put out the light of God with their mouths, but God will certainly make His light shine forever
15	Shakir	They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths but Allah will perfect His light
16	Wahiduddin Khan	they wish to put His light out with their mouths. But He will perfect His light
17	Yusuf Ali	Their intention is to extinguish Allah's Light (by blowing) with their mouths: But Allah will complete (the revelation of) His Light

Interpretational Analysis: Based on the Qur'ānic exegeses referenced, most translations offer similar interpretations of the selected verse.

Exegeses-Based Definitions

Al-Mizān Exegesis explains that in this verse the preposition "li" in this verse refers to the means by which the light of Allah, Jalla Jalaaluh, is being extinguished. This symbolizes the intention of the Jews attempting to snuff out a great light with a small and ineffective means, resulting in darkness. The term "yuṭfiū" means "to extinguish a light". Extinguishing light with a mouth can be done by blowing (Tabatabai, 1974, p. 430).

The Kāshif Exegesis: According to this verse, the Jews sought to undermine Islam with their deceit and lies (as the words emerge from the mouth). In reality, they were struggling against divine power, while Allah remains dominant over all creation (Mughniya, 2004, p. 525).

Summation: As evident from the interpretations provided, the core meaning of this verse seems to revolve around 'the futile attempt of the False in trying to prevent the dominance of the Right'.

Linguistic Analysis of Translation Methods. The analysis has been displayed in the tables below:

Table 6. Translations Employing Alienating Method

مُتِمُّ	بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ	نُورَ	لِيُطْفِئُوا	يُرِيدُونَ
Perfect	Their mouths	Light	Extinguish	Want
Bring to perfection			Put out	Wish
Complete				Desire
				aim
				Intend
				Seek

Table 7. Translations Employing Naturalizing Method

مُتِمُّ نُورِه	بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ
Spread His light in all its fullness	By uttering blasphemies
Make His light shine forever	With their utterances

Table 6 in our linguistic analysis presents five key terms for which seventeen translators offer different *literal translations. The first key term is 'yurīdūna,' for which six possible equivalents are provided.*

Dictionary-Based Analyses:

Almaany Arabic English Dictionary *lists several translations, including 'aim at,' 'aspire to,' 'willing to,' 'desire,' 'mean,' 'intend,' 'have in mind,' 'want,' 'wish,' and 'seek,' among others (Almaany, n.d.).*

Hans Wehr Arabic English Dictionary, s*imilarly, offers definitions such as 'want,' 'wish,' 'desire,' 'intend,' 'strive,' and 'aim' (Cowan, 1976). As evident, all the translators based their renditions on one of the suggested meanings from these two authoritative dictionaries.*

Almaany Arabic English Dictionary. The next key term is "liyuṭfi'ū", for which the translators use either "extinguish" or "put out". Almaany Arabic English Dictionary provides the following equivalents: "extinguish", "put out", "quench", and "smother", while the Hans Wehr Dictionary suggests "put out", "quench", "extinguish" and "extinct" (Almaany, n.d.; Cowan, 1976).

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: To determine which of these English equivalents is more accurate, we should consult the common definitions in the Longman

Dictionary. *"Put* out*": to make a light stop working by pressing or turning a button or switch. "Extinguish": to make a fire or light stop burning or shining. "Quench": to stop a fire from burning (Longman, 2014). According to Longman, either of the first two equivalents is proper (Longman, 2014). As for the third key term, "nūr," all the translators using the alienating method of translation opted for the term "light" as the equivalent.*

Almaany Arabic English Dictionary**:** *The same applies to the fourth key term, "afwāhihim"; here, too, all the translators chose the unique equivalent "their mouths." The final key term is "mutimm," the base form of which is "tamma." The Almaany Dictionary provides "accomplish, complete, finish, fulfill" as equivalents for this verb (Almaany, n.d.).*

Hans Wehr Arabic English Dictionary offers the following: "complete, finish, perfect" (Cowan, 1976). Concerning the second table in the linguistic analysis, two of the translators used the naturalizing method for translating this verse. One of them used "utterance," while the other used "uttering blasphemies" to convey the connotation of the term "afwāhihim." These two translators also translated the phrase "mutimmu nūrihi" differently from the others. One used "spread to its fullness" to express the meaning of the verb "mutimm," while the other used "make shine forever" for this purpose.

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

Translations Employing Alienating Method: Concerning the structures used by the translators, all employed the coordinator "but" to connect the two clauses, except for Ahmed Raza Khan, who used "whereas," and Daryabadi, who used "and" to join the two clauses. As for the second clause of the verse, all the translators, except for two, preferred to use the future tense to refer to Allah's decision. However, for this purpose, Daryabadi used the structure "to be going to," Maududi used the modal "shall," and the others preferred the modal "will."

It is worth mentioning that Maududi, Pickthall, and Daryabadi used an archaic style. Maududi used the term "shall" in his translation, while Pickthall and Daryabadi both used the term "fain" and began the sentence with this term, followed by the modal "would".

Translations Employing Naturalizing Method: Reviewing the table of translations shows that Ahmed Ali and Asad are the two translators who used the "mostly alienating/naturalizing" method of translation. They only referred to the connotation of the term "afwāhihim," while other terms were translated literally. Therefore, their translations cannot be considered "absolutely alienating/naturalizing."

The two translators who used the future tense for the translation of the second clause of this verse are Ahmed Ali and Asad, respectively employing the simple present tense and present perfect. Although Helali & Khan translated this verse using the alienating method, they provided the reader with extra connotative clarification.

4.5. Assessment of the Quality of Translations of Qur'ānic Idioms (61:8).

The TQA of the ayah was done "يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ".

Analysis of the Translations: Asad and Ahmed Ali are the only two translators who used the mostly alienating method. The reason Asad's translation is regarded as mostly alienating

is that he used the term "utterances" as an equivalent for "afwāhihim". He employed the connotative meaning of this term to help the reader understand the image that Allah, Jalla Jalaaluh, depicted. Asad also used the phrase "spread in all its fullness" as an equivalent for "mutimm," which is not accurate, since "mutimm" means to "perfect," not to "spread."

Ahmed Ali has also used the phrase "uttering blasphemies" to refer to the notion of the verse: the means that enemies use to destroy the divine religion, while "afwāhihim" means "mouths." He also used the verb "will" to emphasize divine power and His enemies' weakness in this sense, even though this verb is not directly mentioned in Arabic. Regarding this Qur'ānic idiom, all the translators, except for the two aforementioned, used the absolutely alienating method to translate it.

Ahmed Raza Khan rendered a plain translation, successful in terms of choosing accurate equivalents. However, due to his absolutely alienating translation, a question may arise for the reader as to what it means to put out the light of Allah with their mouths. This issue also applies to the translations of Arberry, Mubarakpuri, Qarai, Sahih International, Wahiduddin Khan, and Shakir.

Daryabadi and Pickthall used a totally archaic structure: "fain would they…," which made their translations unfamiliar to today's generation, as such a structure is no longer used in contemporary English. This is contrary to one of the aims of translating the Noble Qur'ān: to make this Book accessible, practical, and understandable for people of all languages and age groups around the world.

As they always did, Helali & Khan used explanative brackets to clarify the notion of light: "i.e. the religion of Islam, this Qur'ān, and Prophet Muhammad SAW." It is worth mentioning that none of the translators, except for Helali & Khan, clarified the notion of "Allah's light." Maududi also used "spread," which is not a precise equivalent for "mutimm" in this translation.

He included an extra explanation inside brackets, "by blowing," for which there is no direct equivalent in Arabic. Sarwar used the phrase "make shine," which is not a precise equivalent for "mutimmu nūrihi." He also used the adverb "certainly" to emphasize Allah's willpower, which does not exist in the Arabic verse.

Qaribullah and Darwish, Yusuf Ali, Itani, and Helali & Khan are the translators who employed the verb "complete" as an equivalent for "mutimm." Although linguistically speaking, this is not an incorrect choice, the problem with this verb is that the reader may assume that the religion of Allah is incomplete and that He is supposed to complete it from now on.

Yusuf Ali, like Maududi, used the phrase "by blowing." He also used the phrase "the revelation of" to explain the notion of perfection of Allah's light and to emphasize that Islam is a religion revealed by Him. According to the above analyses, concerning the verse (61:8), fifteen translators employed the absolutely alienating method of translation for this verse, and only two translators used the mostly alienating method.

5. Results

5.1. The First Ayah (60:12)

In this chapter, we classified the translations into two main groups, each adopting one of Schleiermacher's methods of translation. By doing such a classification, we concluded that some translations fall between these two categories. That is to say, they are neither "absolutely alienating" nor "absolutely naturalizing"; rather, they are mostly oriented towards one of these two extremes. The translations of Qaribullah & Darwish and Maududi are "mostly alienating", meaning that they have mostly benefited from the alienating method of translation, but we can still trace some natural aspects in their works.

After completing the three-step analysis (interpretational, linguistic, structural), it was concluded that if the second part of the verse is translated using the alienating method, much of the meaning and the message hidden beyond this part of the verse will not be conveyed. That is why some translators provided their readers with clarification in addition to their naturalized translations. Regarding Waddington's model of TQA, the following table can be concluded.

Table 8. Ranking the Twelve Translations (60:12)

Translator	Level of Transfer of ST content & fluency of TL text	Task Completion	Mark
Helali & Khan	Level 4	Almost completely successful	8
Sarwar	Level 4	Almost completely successful	7
Yusuf Ali, Qarai, Ahmed Ali, Shakir	Level 3	Adequate	6
Asad	Level 3	Adequate	5
Sahih International, Pickthall, Arberry, Ahmed Raza Khan	Level 2	Inadequate	4
Qaribullah & Darwish, Maududi	Level 2	Inadequate	3

The above table clearly shows that one translation received a mark of 8, one received a mark of 7, four received a mark of 6, one received a mark of 5, four received a mark of 4, and finally, two received a mark of 3. In the above table, three levels are determined for the translations. The quality of the translation of six translators is level 2, indicating the inadequate quality of most of the translations for this verse. The quality of five translations is level 3, considered adequate, and the quality level of two translations is level 4, almost completely successful.

Figure 1 compares levels of translation quality based on the selected theoretical framework. Reviewing the above two phrasal verbs, the first is mostly used in informal situations. Our source text is the Word of Allah, Jalla Jalaaluh, and is, thus, highly precious. For this reason, we cannot use informal phrases and expressions, even though they might be precise. As for the second phrasal verb, it can be used in the translation because it is formal and conveys the meaning.

The English Idioms and Phrases Implying the Notion of Bringing Accusation

Since there is no English idiom that exactly matches the notion of "bringing accusation," we searched for phrasal verbs with the same meaning and identified the following two:

Cooking up (informal):

- Merriam Webster: "to invent (something, such as an idea, excuse, etc.) to deal with a particular situation" (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.);

- Cambridge Dictionary: "to invent something using your imagination and sometimes dishonestly" (Cambridge, n.d.);

- Collins Dictionary: "To plan a dishonest scheme or make up a story" (Forsyth, 2014);

- Longman Activator: "To invent an excuse, reason, plan, especially one that is slightly dishonest or unlikely to work" (Longman, 2014).

Trump up (phrasal verb) + charge:

- Merriam Webster: "to concoct, especially with intent to deceive" (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.);

- Cambridge Dictionary: "To give or use false information so that someone will be accused of doing something wrong and punished" (Cambridge, n.d.);

- Collins Dictionary: "To concoct or invent (a charge, accusation, etc.) so as to deceive or implicate someone" (Forsyth, 2014);

- Longman Activator: "To concoct, especially with intent to deceive" (Longman, 2014).

5.2. The Second Ayah (61:8)

Since the translations were almost identical to one another, the marks given to the translations based on Waddington's model of TQA were also similar.

Table 9. Results of the Second Ayah (61:8)

Translator	Level of Transfer of ST content &	Task Completion	Mark
Arberry, Wahiduddin Khan, Shakir, Ahmed Raza Khan, Yusuf Ali, Helali & Khan, Itani, Maududi, Asad, Mubarak Puri, Qarai,	Level 5	Successful	9
Pickthall, Daryabadi	Level 4	Almost completely successful	7

Concerning the verse (61:8), the marks given to the translations are not varied. Based on the above table, fifteen translations received a mark of 9, and two received a mark of 7. Thus, the quality of the translations is categorized into two levels: 4 and 5. The quality of the two translations, which received a mark of 7, is level 4, and the quality of the fifteen translations with a mark of 9 is level 5. Therefore, it can be argued that almost all the translators were successful in their work.

English Idioms and Phrases Implying the Notion of 'Putting Out Sth With a Mouth'

Reference to the dictionaries provided the following definitions:

Blow something out:

- Merriam Webster: "To extinguish by a gust" (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.);
- Cambridge Dictionary: "If a flame blows out or you blow it out, it stops burning when a person or the wind blows on it" (Cambridge, n.d.);
- Collins Dictionary: "If you blow out a flame or a candle, you blow at it so that it stops burning" (Forsyth, 2014);
- Longman Activator: "To make a flame or fire stop burning by blowing on it" (Longman, 2014).

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

Suggestions for the translation of the first verse (61:8)

"Blow out" is the closest verbal phrase to refer to the notion meant by the verse. The verb phrase "blow out" encompasses both meanings: "Iṭfā'" and "bi-afwāhihim," as this phrase means "to extinguish a light using the mouth." Therefore, using this phrase, we can offer a translation based on the 'naturalizing' method of Schleiermacher: "They want to blow out the light of God [with their blasphemies], yet Allah completes His light". Concerning the alienating method of translation, we can also offer a meaningful translation in line with this approach: "They want to extinguish the light of God with their mouths, yet Allah completes His light".

Suggestions for the translation of the first verse (60:12)

Taking into consideration the points of strength and weakness in the thirteen translations, the following two translations are offered:

If we are to render an "absolutely alienating" or "mostly alienating" translation of the verse, we should benefit from the translations of Sahih International, Arberry, Ahmed Raza Khan, and Pickthall, whose marks were higher than others employing the same method. Here is our suggestion for this method: "nor bring false accusation against others which they themselves have fabricated between their hands and feet."

Looking at the result table, we find that Helali & Khan and Sarwar were the two translators who received the highest mark among those who employed the "absolutely naturalizing" method of translation. Keeping their translations in mind, we suggest the following: "nor trump up a charge against others which they themselves have fabricated [by bearing an illegitimate child in their womb]."

6. Conclusions

As in any language, Arabic contains language-specific idioms that reflect Arab culture and environment. Idioms enrich the language by capturing human experiences and the way people perceive the world around them. Different cultures conceptualize reality in unique ways, which gives idioms their cultural characteristics. Translating such idioms into another language can pose comprehension challenges if the translator is not well-versed in Arabic culture. This explains why some existing translations of Qur'ānic idioms fail to fully convey their intended depth of meaning.

The findings of this study show that most translators face both linguistic and cultural challenges when translating idiomatic expressions, as these are deeply intertwined with cultural values, metaphorical aspects, and stylistic features. If we claim that translation should involve no loss of information, then, in reality, translation—and even communication—would be impossible. No form of communication, whether intralinguistic, interlinguistic, or intersemiotic, can occur without some degree of information loss, and translation loss is an inherent part of the process.

This study also demonstrates that both Muslim intellectuals and English translators agree that culture-bound elements of the Noble Qur'ān are untranslatable. Based on this understanding, the idea of 'absolute equivalence' for idiomatic expressions—true representations of culture-bound concepts—does not hold. Therefore, a literal translation of such expressions inevitably results in a loss of meaning, ambiguity, or even a distortion of the original message.

Foreignizing ST idioms, or offering a faithful translation, provides the reader with an opportunity to access a different way of thinking about the world. The translator bears the responsibility of conveying the cultural heritage of the ST to the target language readers. Domesticating ST idioms is possible when there is an overlap between cultures, allowing the same situations to be reproduced in the target culture. However, it becomes more difficult when these idioms are specific to a particular speech community and express knowledge unique to that community's mentality. Proponents of this approach argue that translation should emphasize universal elements to bridge cultures, rather than separate them through literal translation.

Nonetheless, there are translations that benefit from using either of these methods, meaning the translation may be a mixture of both approaches. In such cases, the translation can be considered either "almost naturalizing" or "almost alienating." When translating sacred texts, especially the Glorious Qur'ān, the loss of meaning becomes more prominent and raises questions about the legitimacy of the translation due to the spiritual, historical, theological, and linguistic aspects involved. It is the translator's responsibility to find appropriate ways to compensate for these losses, using translation methods supported by well-tested theories.

In general, the translation of idioms should aim to produce the same stylistic effect on the TL reader as the original idioms do on the SL reader. In the case of idiomatic expressions, the underlying message must be conveyed. Based on this premise, a "thought-for-thought" translation is recommended.

References

Abdelaziz, A. (2018). *Translation of Arabic idiomatic and proverbial expressions into French in Tahar Wattar's novels: The Fisherman and the Palace & the Ace and the Earthquake* (Doctoral dissertation). Linguistic Science and Translation, Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages, Algeria.

Abdul-Raof, H. (2001). *Qur'ān translation: Discourse, texture and exegesis.* Curzon.

Ahmed Raza Khan. (n.d.). *Al-Qur'ān ul Kareem.* https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.ahmedraza/7:40

Al-Badrani, Y. (2013). The translation of idioms in the Glorious Qur'ān into English. *College of Basic Education Researchers Journal, 12* (4), 1011–1034.

Aldahesh, A. Y. (2014). (Un)Translatability of the Qur'ān: A theoretical perspective. *International Journal of Linguistics, 6* (6), 23–45. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v6i6.6361

Ali, A. (2001). *Al-Qur'ān: A contemporary translation.* Princeton University Press.

Almaany. (n.d.-a). *afwāhihim.* In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/afw āhihim

Almaany. (n.d.-b). *bayna aydīhinna wa arjulihinna* . In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/bayna-ayd īhinna-wa-arjulihinna

Almaany. (n.d.-c). *Buhtān.* In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/Buht ān

Almaany. (n.d.-d). *fa ra ya*. In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/fara ya

Almaany. (n.d.-e). *liyutfi'ū.* In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/liyu ṭfi'ū

Almaany. (n.d.-f). *nūr.* In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/n ūr

Almaany. (n.d.-g). *ṭa fi a.* In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/ ṭa-fi-a

Almaany. (n.d.-h). *tamma.* In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/tamma

Almaany. (n.d.-i). *ya'tīna bi.* In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/ya 'tīna-bi

Almaany. (n.d.-j). *yaftarīnahū.* In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/yaftar īnahū

Almaany. (n.d.-k). *yurīdūna.* In *Almaany online Arabic-English dictionary.* https://www.almaany.com/yur īdūna

Assami, E., Kennedy, M., & Bantley, A. (1997). *Sahih International translation.* Dar Abul Qasim.

Baker, M. (1992). *A coursebook on translation.* Routledge.

Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.-a). *Blow sth out.* https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/blow-sth-out

Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.-b). *Trump up.* https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/trump-up

Cowan, J. M. (Ed.). (1976). *Hans Wehr: A dictionary of modern written Arabic* (3rd ed.). Ithaca Press.

Forsyth, M. (Ed.). (2014). *Collins English dictionary* (12th ed.). HarperCollins UK.

Heidarzadeh, M. (2016). *Rhetorical analysis of fifty Qur'ānic proverbs* (Master's thesis). Qom University, Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences.

Hosseini, H. (2001). *Anwār derakhshān* (1st ed.). Lotfi Publication.

House, J. (2014). *Translation quality assessment: Past and present* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Ibn Kathir, I. I. U. (2000). *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (2nd ed., S. S. R. al-Mubarakpuri, Trans.). Dar-us-Salam Publications.

Iqbal, M. (2004). Abdullah Yusuf Ali & Muhammad Asad, two approaches to the English translation of the Qur'ān. In C. Turner (Ed.), *The Koran: Critical concepts in Islamic studies* (Vol. IV, pp. 281–296). Routledge Curzon.

Khalaf, A. M. H. (2016). *Translation of explicit Qur'ānic proverbs and their rhetorics into English.* University of Baghdad.

Khaleghian, S. (2014). *A descriptive comparative approach to strategies of translating sound devices in English poetic and non-poetic translations of the Holy Qur'ān: A case study of Chapter 30* (Master's thesis). Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Faculty of Foreign Languages.

Koorani, M. (2012). *Strategies applied in translating proverbs in bilingual English-Persian dictionaries* (Master's thesis). Allameh Tabataba'i University, Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages.

Larson, M. (1984). *Meaning-based translation: A guide to cross-language equivalence.* University Press.

Longman. (2014). *Blow sth out.* In *Longman dictionary of contemporary English* (6th ed.). Pearson Education.

Longman. (2014). *Trump up.* In *Longman dictionary of contemporary English* (6th ed.). Pearson Education.

Manafi, A. S. (2003). Chimerical ideas of total equivalence in translating the word of Allah. *Translation Studies Journal, 1* (3), 33–46.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.-a). *Blow sth out.* https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Blow%20sth%20out

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.-b). *Trump up.* https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Trump%20up

Mughniya, M. J. (2004). *Al-Kashif* (Vol. 7). Dar al Kotob Al-Islami.

Munday, J. (2016). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Nasiri, R. (2014). Function of kinayi concerning Qur'ānic verses. *Seraj Monir, 14* (14), 109–126.

Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation.* Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Qurashi, A. A. (2012). *Aḥsan al-ḥadīth* (Vol. 11). Navid Islam.

Schleiermacher, F. (2012). On the different methods of translating. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (3rd ed., pp. 43–63). Routledge.

Tabatabai, M. H. (1974). *Al-Mizān* (Vol. 19). Alami.

The Qur'ān (A. Maududi, Trans.). (2010). Islamic Publication.

The Qur'ān (A. Yusuf Ali, Trans.). (2001). Wordsworth Editions.

The Qur'ān (A. J. Arberry, Trans.). (1996). The Touchstone.

The Qur'ān (A. M. Daryabadi, Trans.). (n.d.). The Islamic Foundation.

The Qur'ān (A. Q. Qarai, Trans.). (2005). *The Qur'ān* (2nd ed.). ICAS Press.

The Qur'ān (H. Qaribullah & A. Darwish, Trans.). (2001). https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.qaribullah/60:12

The Qur'ān (H. Qaribullah & A. Darwish, Trans.). (2001). https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.qaribullah/61:8

The Qur'ān (M. Asad, Trans.). (2005). The Book Foundation.

The Qur'ān (M. Muhsin Khan & M. T. al-Hilali, Trans.). (2011). Dar-us-Salam Publications.

The Qur'ān (M. Sarwar, Trans.). (2001). Islamic Seminary.

The Qur'ān (M. H. Shakir, Trans.). (1996). Tahrike Tarsile Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān (M. M. Pickthal, Trans.). (1999). Kitab Bhavan.

The Qur'ān (T. Itani, Trans.). (2015). ClearQur'ān.com.

The Qur'ān (W. Khan, Trans.). (2004). Goodword Books.

Waddington, C. (2001). Different methods of evaluating student translations: The question of validity. *Meta: Translators' Journal, 46,* 311–325. https://doi.org/10.7202/002624ar

Zolfaghari, H. (2008). The difference between kinayi and zarb al-mathal. *Pazhoohesh Zaban va Adabiyyat Farsi, 10,* 109–133.

International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies (TTAIS) is an electronic academic journal which publishes scholarly original and high quality manuscripts investigating the methodology for analyzing and rendering Islamic texts and terminology. Licensed by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in Islamic Republic of Iran, TTAIS adheres to open access policy to accelerate the barrier-free dissemination of scientific knowledge which results in higher visibility and increased citation for authors' works.

Akhund-e Khorasani
Center for Graduate Studies

Baqir al-Olum
University of Qom