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# **TTAIS**

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

**Discourse Analysis of Ayatollah Khamenei's Letter to American University Students: Applying Paul Gee's Theoretical Framework**

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**Cultural and Linguistic Context in Lexical Equivalence: A Comparative Study of Five English Translations of the Holy Qur'an**

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**A Comparative Analysis of Qur'anic Allusions in Two English Translations of Hafiz's Poems**

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**The Role of Translation Movements in Developing Modern Islamic Civilization: Civilizational-Cultural Perspective in Focus**

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## **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.

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- 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;
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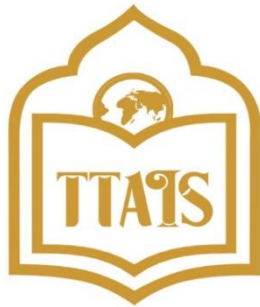
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- Genealogy and etymology of terms in Islamic discourse;
- Pragmatics of Islamic discourse;
- Knowledge management in Islamic discourse;
- Corpus linguistics as regards the translation of texts in the area of Islamic studies;
- Discourse analysis and Islamic studies;
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- Evaluation of translational equivalents in Islamic studies;
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- Methodology of translating Islamic texts and terms;
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- Investigation into problems in the translation of Islamic discourse;
- Discussion of cultural issues in the translation of Islamic texts.

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## Discourse Analysis of Ayatollah Khamenei's Letter to American University Students: Applying Paul Gee's Theoretical Framework

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines a recent letter by Ayatollah Khamenei addressed to university students in the United States who are actively participating in protests against U.S. foreign policy and its support for the Zionist regime. The central research objective is to analyze the discourse structures within the letter to determine how they function in advancing specific messages within a defined ideological framework. Additionally, the study explores how the letter constructs notions of power and identity, and how these constructions may influence public perception. Employing James Paul Gee's discourse analysis methodology (2014, 2018), the study investigates both the textual and ideological dimensions of the letter. The findings highlight several key themes: the dichotomy between political entities (e.g., the Zionist regime versus Palestine), the praise of American students for supporting the people of Gaza, and the advocacy for Palestinian human rights in the pursuit of peace and independence. These themes are embedded within the broader context of global political conflict. The analysis also identifies multiple identity constructs, including the U.S. government and its political allies, American youth and student activists, Muslims, the Axis of Resistance, and the oppressed, particularly women and children, in occupied Palestine. Through this discourse, the letter seeks to persuade, commend, and galvanize American students, urging them to remain on what is portrayed as "the right side of history".

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## 1. Introduction

Letters authored by heads of state and political leaders hold significant importance due to their international media influence and communicative potential. These letters serve as official articulations of a nation's policies and positions, functioning as platforms through which leaders can express national viewpoints and strategic stances. As such, they represent a powerful and effective tool for advancing political objectives and conducting public diplomacy on the global stage.

A review of the existing literature reveals that the analysis of political letters tends to focus on one or more of the following dimensions:

1. **Rhetorical Aspects:** Scholars have examined the use of rhetorical devices such as *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* to understand how persuasion is constructed in political communication.
2. **Framing and Narrative Construction:** Discourse analysis has been employed to investigate how political figures frame issues and build narratives within their letters.
3. **Language and Power Dynamics:** Research has explored how language reflects and reinforces power structures and social hierarchies.
4. **Comparative Studies:** Comparative analyses have highlighted differences in rhetorical style, cultural values, and the role of political letters across various political and cultural contexts.

On May 25, 2024, Ayatollah Khamenei issued a letter addressed to the youth and university students of the United States. In this letter, he criticized the U.S. government's political stance in support of the Zionist regime and called on American youth to intensify their opposition to these policies. The rationale for selecting this particular letter as the subject of analysis lies in its historical and political relevance, as well as its embedded Islamic ideological content, which warrants closer examination. The central research problem of this article concerns the discourse structures employed in the letter and their effectiveness in conveying specific messages within a defined ideological context. Furthermore, the study explores how the notions of power and identity are constructed in the letter and how these constructions might influence public opinion. In the evolving landscape of political communication, gaining insight into the discourse strategies utilized in such letters is vital for understanding their broader impact on political awareness and civic engagement.

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

- What key topics and concepts are emphasized in the letter, and what is their significance?
- To which fundamental ideological frameworks within the Islamic world do these emphasized themes correspond?

To address these questions, the study adopts James Paul Gee's discourse analysis framework (2014, 2018). This approach is particularly suited for answering the following sub-questions:

- What topics are foregrounded in the text, and why are they emphasized in the leader's discourse?
- What identities are constructed and highlighted in the letter, and for what purpose?
- What kinds of relationships and distributions of social goods are established through the letter's discourse?
- What is the semiotic system or format used in the letter, and what is its significance?

Gee's analytical and theoretical framework is therefore introduced and justified at the outset of the study as the primary tool for analysis.

### 1.1. Why writing a letter?

According to Swanson and Nimmo (2014), political communication encompasses a variety of forms, including letters, which serve to establish a connection between leaders and the public. Political letters—ranging from formal addresses to personal correspondence—have historically functioned as crucial tools for leaders to communicate with their audiences. These letters are recognized as important historical documents that reflect the values, ideologies, and priorities of political figures. Morris (2017) emphasizes that letters often convey policies and national narratives during pivotal moments, thereby shaping public sentiment and engagement. The role of political letters becomes especially significant in times of crisis. Benoit (1995) outlines how leaders use letters to address crises, provide reassurance, and outline responses aimed at maintaining public trust. This perspective is echoed by Coombs (2007), who argues that effective crisis communication can reduce damage to public perception and foster a sense of unity.

An *open letter* is a type of letter intended for a wide audience, often written to a specific individual but disseminated publicly through newspapers, websites, or other media. Open letters usually take the form of correspondence addressed to a particular person but are meant for public consumption. Critical open letters addressed to political leaders are especially common. Two of the most prominent and influential examples include *J'accuse...!* by Émile Zola, addressed to the President of France and accusing the government of wrongfully prosecuting Alfred Dreyfus for alleged espionage; and Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, which includes the famous line: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

In past centuries, letter writing was a significant form of communication, typically reserved for private exchanges between the sender and the recipient. Consequently, an *open letter*, usually published in a newspaper or magazine, offered a rare glimpse into a public figure's message directed at another prominent individual. Open letters began to appear more frequently in newspapers during the late 19th century. By the 21st century, the concept of the open letter has evolved significantly, often resembling a press release. Today, large volumes of open letters are distributed automatically to numerous newspapers and media outlets. In many cases, blog posts or social media posts are also considered open letters.

A notable contemporary trend is the increasing prevalence of open letters with multiple signatories, resembling online petitions. In academic settings, scientists who publish open letters about scientific matters may adopt conventions typical of scholarly communication—such as seeking informal peer review prior to publication or viewing the act of public

engagement itself as a valuable academic contribution. The practice of political leaders authoring open letters, established as a norm since World War I, remains highly relevant today. While many open letters are politically motivated, they are by no means exclusive to political actors. Once their function and influence in public discourse became apparent, open letters gained traction among a broad range of social groups. Today, thousands of open letters are issued for cultural, social, and civic purposes, often as appeals to change societal conditions or to challenge official decisions.

In the contemporary era, leaders of various government bodies and departments continue to regard the letter as a highly effective medium of communication. Despite the proliferation of digital and media platforms, the written letter retains a unique authority and permanence that cannot be easily replicated by a contentious public statement or even an article published in one of the world's most renowned newspapers. A letter is often considered "hard evidence", a concrete and traceable record that directly reflects the voice and intent of the individual or institution behind it.

At the same time, some scholars and commentators evaluate the significance of correspondence from a historical perspective. They argue that, just as historians have reconstructed past events by interpreting inscriptions and analyzing letters written by previous generations, the letters composed today will hold substantial historical value in the future. While the rise of technology has introduced alternative means of documentation, such as video and photography, letters remain invaluable for their narrative quality and depth. For future historians, today's correspondence may serve as a credible source of insight into the social, cultural, and political landscape of the early 21st century. It is not difficult to imagine that simple letters written in our time could help future generations understand the complexities of contemporary life, or that novelists and filmmakers might draw upon these documents to recreate a vivid portrait of this period.

There are several motivations for choosing the format of an open letter. An individual might write one to publicly criticize a person or policy, to express a personal opinion in a direct and visible manner, or to initiate, or attempt to conclude, a broader public dialogue on a contentious issue. Open letters may also be intended to draw focused public attention to a particular recipient, thereby prompting action or response. In other cases, they function as tools in public relations crises or reputation management efforts. Finally, some communications are composed as open letters out of necessity or formality, especially when the subject matter requires the structure or decorum of traditional letter-writing, but with a desire for public exposure.

The importance of political letters can be understood across several key dimensions. First, they hold considerable historical significance, often serving as enduring records of a leader's thoughts, policies, and interactions with their constituents. For instance, the letters of U.S. presidents during pivotal periods—such as Abraham Lincoln's correspondence during the Civil War—offer valuable insight into the political and social climate of their times. Second, political letters function as a means of communicating policies and values. Leaders frequently use this medium to articulate national narratives and ideological positions, aiming to persuade or mobilize the public. Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Fireside Chats," though delivered via radio, can be interpreted as a modern evolution of the political letter, intended to inform and reassure the American public during the Great Depression.

Additionally, political letters often aim to establish an emotional connection with their audience. By employing rhetorical strategies rooted in ethos, pathos, and logos, leaders

attempt to evoke solidarity, foster national identity, and inspire civic engagement. Scholars have noted the effectiveness of these strategies in building trust and resonance with the public. Finally, in moments of crisis, letters serve as essential communication tools. Whether addressing national emergencies, political upheaval, or social unrest, such correspondence is used to reassure citizens, clarify government actions, and maintain public confidence. Research underscores that the tone, framing, and content of these messages can significantly influence how the public perceives and responds to a crisis.

## 2. Literature Review

This literature review synthesizes existing research on the role of political letters, the discourse strategies employed by political leaders, and their impact on public perception. The background investigation of the topic is organized into the following sections:

### 2.1. Discourse Strategies in Political Letters:

Discourse analysis has emerged as a vital methodology for examining rhetorical strategies in political letters. Fairclough (1995) provides a framework for analyzing language within its social context, enabling researchers to uncover how leaders construct meaning through discourse. Wodak and Meyer (2001) emphasize the role of rhetorical devices, such as ethos, pathos, and logos, in shaping public perception, highlighting how leaders often leverage emotional appeals to mobilize support. In analyzing U.S. presidential letters, Baker (2019) identifies strategies such as inclusive language and narrative framing, which foster rapport with audiences. Similarly, Harris (2021) explores how political leaders frame issues in letters, demonstrating how strategic language choices shape public discourse. Several studies have employed discourse analysis, including Gee's framework, to examine political texts, both written and oral, as outlined below:

Ghasemi (2015) explores how discourse analysis, specifically Gee's framework, can enhance understanding of identity construction in international relations texts, proposing Gee's method as a coherent and precise approach for analyzing identities within such texts. Pahlavannezhad and Estahbanati (2008) analyzed the 2006 United Nations General Assembly speeches of the presidents of Iran and the United States, applying speech act theory to identify key rhetorical strategies. Noori (2012) and Keyvani (2012) examined Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's speeches at the UN General Assembly, highlighting the core diplomatic messages conveyed. Salimi and Zargarbashi (2013) analyzed speeches by four Iranian presidents at the UN General Assembly, focusing on their discourse strategies. Moosavi and Nayeri (2014) applied Austin's speech act theory to compare the speeches of the presidents of Iran and the United States, identifying performative elements in their rhetoric. Mazidi, Soltanifar, and Soroushpour (2015) used discourse analysis to compare the UN General Assembly speeches of Ahmadinejad and Khatami, aiming to clarify Iran's foreign policy under different administrations. Mojtahedzadeh and Mojtahedzadeh (2016) analyzed Hassan Rouhani's first UN General Assembly speech using a discourse analysis approach. Ansarian, Davari Ardakani, and Bamshadi (2019) applied Gee's discourse analysis framework to examine President Rouhani's 2017 UN General Assembly speech, focusing on identity and rhetorical strategies.

### 2.2. Iran's Supreme Leader's Letters Using Discourse Analysis

This section investigates significant letters, particularly those authored by Iran's supreme leaders, through a discourse analysis approach. Key studies include:

Bashir and Aghayan Chavoshi (2019) conducted a discourse analysis of all the letters sent by Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei to the Hajj Congress. They identified the central themes of Imam Khomeini's discourse diplomacy as monotheism, the inseparability of religion and politics, Muslim unity, opposition to Western arrogance, support for the oppressed, and the revolution. In contrast, Ayatollah Khamenei's discourse diplomacy emphasizes support for Palestine, Islamic awakening, resistance to cultural invasion, and steadfastness. Arab Yusufabadi, Seifi Qara Yataq, and Arab Yusufabadi (2015) analyzed the letter addressed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to the youth of Europe and America. This letter invites youth to engage in informed research about Islam and the life of the Prophet. According to the authors, among various speech acts employed, the representative speech act is the most prevalent, used to explain and clarify Islamic principles and offer an accurate portrayal of Islam to the younger generation.

Rahdar (2022) argues that the discourse analysis of the Supreme Leader's letter to Western youth enhances the potential influence and effectiveness of its message. Sadeghi, Mirzaei, and Tateian (2020) conducted a study focusing on keywords associated with anti-arrogance discourse—such as “arrogance” and “anti-arrogance”—in the speeches of the Supreme Leader. Their findings suggest that identifying these discursive elements reflects the Leader's realistic perspective and situational awareness, which in turn promotes informed and active resistance against perceived enemies.

### *2.3. Impact on Public Perception*

The impact of discourse strategies in political letters on public perception has been widely studied. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) demonstrate how framing effects can significantly shape public opinion, indicating that the way issues are presented in political letters influences citizens' attitudes and beliefs. Similarly, Goffman (1974) emphasizes that the presentation of self in political letters contributes to shaping the leader's public persona, thereby affecting how audiences perceive their authority and credibility.

More recent research has examined the effects of digital communication on political letters. Boulianne (2015) highlights how social media transforms traditional communication by enabling leaders to interact with the public more directly and informally. This transformation prompts critical questions about the continued effectiveness of traditional discourse strategies in the digital era and their influence on public perception.

Overall, the literature underscores the importance of political letters as a communicative medium that reflects historical contexts, articulates policies, and shapes public opinion. The discourse strategies used in these letters play a vital role in determining how messages are received and interpreted. As political communication evolves, further research is necessary to understand the changing dynamics of political letters within digital communication frameworks and their implications for public engagement and perception.

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

As Brown and Yule (1983) explain, discourse is a system that guides how we use and understand language in real-world contexts and specific situations. Discourse analysis, therefore, is the study of language use in these real-life settings. This type of investigation holds that language is not only a tool for expressing ideas but also a means of performing actions and effecting change in the world. The logic behind the “weak” version of discourse analysis is that the world exists objectively and independently; however, our access to it is



mediated through language, which is primarily an interpretive and narrative process. According to this view, nothing comes into existence without being expressed either orally or in writing. Thus, ontology is narratively oriented—things only exist as they are formed through language. In contrast, proponents of the “strong” version of discourse analysis argue that language is everything. They claim that language creates reality, and there is no reality outside of language that can exist or be understood independently. Some approaches to discourse analysis focus closely on purely linguistic factors, such as the syntactic structure of sentences, to uncover hidden meanings within the text. This represents a purely linguistic approach, based on the premise that certain issues are rooted primarily in language itself. Other approaches extend beyond language to examine the relationship between texts and broader institutions of knowledge, such as social sciences, philosophy, or psychology. The theoretical framework adopted in this study aligns with the former approach to discourse analysis, which emphasizes the interpretive and narrative role of language in accessing reality.

James Paul Gee’s framework for discourse analysis is a well-known approach that highlights the connection between language, social practices, and identity. According to Gee (2014, 2018), humans perform certain actions through language that bring things into existence, create, or even destroy. Gee’s methodology for discourse analysis, which is employed in the present study, includes several theoretical tools. These tools consist of seven types of acts that language can perform and six guiding questions whose answers help reveal the function of a given text. Thus, discourse analysis involves examining the interplay between these acts and questions. In Gee’s view, language is used to perform one or more of the following acts:

1. *Attaching significance*: use of language to give meaning and value to entities. Foregrounding is one way of attributing value to things and using highly frequent linguistic items is one way of foregrounding. Marginalizing them equates to degradation. What discourse analysis tries to do is to clarify what is that a text tries to attach significance to?

2. *Doing actions*: Language is used to say things and to do things too. This does not contain only physical actions, but informing for instance is another way of doing things. Here, what discourse analyst is doing is to answer this question: What the text is doing?

3. *Assuming and adopting identities to entities*: Language is used to create new identities. Identity can refer to the writer/ speaker’s social group or institutions. Means of creating new identities can be spotted by questions like: What identity the writer/ speaker is trying to show others? What identity the writer/ speaker is trying to attribute and create for others? What linguistic tools/ mechanisms are used for the assumption of new identities?

4. *Forming, building, and developing relations/ relationships*: Language is used to form relations, to develop them, or to continue them. Relations between human beings and between human beings and objects or even between objects are built by the language. The question which a discourse analyst may ask to recognize relations is that how linguistic mechanisms (lexical or syntactic) are used to maintain and continue relations between identities created?

5. *Adopting and specifying policies*: Policy does not refer to the nations’ behaviors, but it refers to the distinction which a text is trying to make between fair and unfair, good and evil. Here, the analyst will ask: What are the social goods and how are they distributed? “The

social goods”, here means either public values like freedom, respect, equality or values specified to a certain group or community like the right to carry gun in the United States.

6. *Making connections*: The connections and relations between things in the world will be manifested in language, too. The analyst will ask: How can linguistic means be used to create or lose connections?

7. *Inserting sign system and knowledge systems*: Sign systems like linguistic systems such as languages, language varieties or non-linguistic systems like maps, graphs can signify meaning. These sign systems reflect belief and knowledge systems. So the analyst will ask: How linguistic items are used to create or introduce a sign or knowledge system?

Then Gee comes up with this new idea that the analyst can take advantage of some theoretical means too:

1. *situated meaning*: a word or sentence meaning in context which can be different from their meaning in isolation or in a dictionary or their current and common use

2. *social languages*: Different styles or varieties of a language related to certain and specified social identities like literary, political, or even forensic language.

3. *intertextuality*: a quotation from another related text or a reference to it

4. *figured world*: the cognitive systems rooted in being a participant or member of a certain culture or community. In every world and realm there can be found certain actions, agents, and values.

5. *Discourse*: discursal beliefs, values, and insights

6. *Controversies*: current disputes and topics surrounding us which are publically common to wide population of people and mass media.

The main aspects of this theory are as follow:

1. *Discourses*: Gee distinguishes between “discourse” (with a lowercase ‘d’), which refers to language use in context, and “Discourses” (with an uppercase ‘D’), which encompass broader social practices, identities, and power relations associated with language use. Discourses involve ways of being, acting, and valuing in society.

2. *Social Language*: He emphasizes that language is not just a tool for communication but a means of enacting social identities and relationships. Different contexts and social settings shape how language is used, and these usages can reinforce or challenge power structures.

3. *Four Perspectives*: Gee suggests analyzing discourse from four perspectives:

- *The Interactional*: How individuals interact through language.
- *The Contextual*: The social and cultural contexts influencing language use.
- *The Institutional*: The role of institutions in shaping discourse.

- The Ideological: How language reflects and perpetuates ideologies.

4. Building Tasks: He also discusses “building tasks”, which are the ways in which individuals use language to construct their identities and relationships in discourse. This involves examining how language choices can create different meanings and relationships among speakers and listeners.

5. Power and Identity: Gee’s framework highlights the interplay between language, identity, and power. It examines how language can be a site of struggle for power and how individuals negotiate their identities through discourse.

Gee’s approach is often used in various fields, including linguistics, education, and sociology, to analyze how language functions in social contexts and how it shapes our understanding of identity and power dynamics.

#### **4. Textual analysis**

The following is Ayatollah Khamenei’s letter addressed to American university students following their courageous defense of the Palestinian people:

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

I am writing this letter to the young people whose awakened conscience has moved them to defend the oppressed women and children of Gaza.

Dear university students in the United States of America, this message is an expression of our empathy and solidarity with you. As the page of history is turning, you are standing on the right side of it.

You have now formed a branch of the Resistance Front and have begun an honorable struggle in the face of your government's ruthless pressure—a government which openly supports the brutal Zionist regime.

The greater Resistance Front which shares the same understandings and feelings that you have today, has been engaged in the same struggle for many years in a place far from you. The goal of this struggle is to put an end to the blatant oppression that the brutal Zionist terrorist network has inflicted on the Palestinian nation for many years. After seizing their country, the Zionist regime has subjected them to the harshest of pressures and tortures.

The apartheid Zionist regime's genocide today is the continuation of extreme oppressive behavior which has been going on for decades. Palestine is an independent land with a long history. It is a nation comprised of Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

After the World War, the capitalist Zionist network gradually imported several thousand terrorists into this land with the help of the British government. These terrorists attacked cities and villages, murdered tens of thousands of people and pushed out multitudes into neighboring countries. They seized their homes, businesses and farmlands, formed a government in the usurped land of Palestine and called it Israel.

After England's initial help, the United States became the greatest supporter of this usurper regime, ceaselessly providing it with political, economic and military support. In an act of

unforgivable recklessness, the United States even opened the way and provided assistance for the regime's production of nuclear weapons.

The Zionist regime used an iron-fist policy against the defenseless people of Palestine from the very beginning and has, day by day, intensified its brutality, terror and repression in complete disregard of all moral, human and religious values.

The United States government and its allies refused to even frown upon this state terrorism and ongoing oppression. And today, some remarks by the US government regarding the horrific crimes taking place in Gaza are more hypocritical than real.

The Resistance Front emerged from this dark environment of despair, and the establishment of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran expanded and fortified it.

The global Zionist elite – who owns most US and European media corporations or influences them through funding and bribery – has labeled this courageous, humane resistance movement as "terrorism".

Can one call a people a terrorist nation for defending themselves on their own land against the crimes of the occupying Zionists? And is helping such a nation and strengthening it, an act of terrorism?

The oppressive leaders of global hegemony mercilessly distort even the most basic human concepts. They portray the ruthless, terrorist Israeli regime as acting in self-defense – yet they portray the Palestinian Resistance which defends its freedom, security and the right to self-determination, as terrorists!

I would like to assure you that today the circumstances are changing. A different fate awaits the important region of West Asia. The people's conscience has awakened on a global scale, and the truth is coming to light.

Moreover, the Resistance Front has grown in strength and will become even stronger.

And history is turning a page.

Besides you students from dozens of American universities, there have also been uprisings in other countries among academics and the general public.

The support and solidarity of your professors is a significant and consequential development. This can offer some measure of comfort in the face of your government's police brutality and the pressures it is exerting on you. I too am among those who empathize with you young people, and value your perseverance.

The Qur'ān's lesson for us **Muslims** and all of humanity, is to stand up for that which is right: "So be steadfast as you have been commanded" (11:112).

The Qur'ān's lesson for human relations is: "Do not oppress and do not be oppressed" (2:279).

The Resistance Front advances by a comprehensive understanding and the practice of these and hundreds of other such commands – and will attain victory with the permission of God.

My advice to you is to become familiar with the Qur'ān.

Sayyid Ali Khamenei

May 25, 2024

## 5. Analysis

This section presents an analysis of the letter text, guided by the selected theoretical framework.

### 1. Discourses vs. Discourses:

- Lowercase “d” discourse: Analyze the language and rhetorical strategies used in the letter (e.g., persuasive techniques, emotional appeals) depicted by the phrases like *Dear university students in the United States of America, you are standing on the right side of it.*

Uppercase “D” Discourses: Identify the broader social practices and identities that Khamenei is invoking, such as Islamic solidarity, anti-imperialism, and youth empowerment. depicted by the phrases like *brutal Zionist regime, this message is an expression of our empathy and solidarity with you.*

### 2. Building Tasks:

- Examine how Khamenei constructs identities for both himself and the recipients (American university students). Here some identities are created and built:

- *oppressed women and children of Gaza*
- *university students in the United States of America/ you*
- *Zionist regime*
- *England/ British government*
- *Resistance Front*
- *Palestine/ Palestinians*
- *Islamic Republic of Iran*

### 3. Four Perspectives:

- Interactional: Assess how Khamenei addresses the students and engages with them through the letter. by the phrases like *Dear university students in the United States of America, you are standing on the right side of it.*

- Contextual: Situate the letter within the contemporary political climate regarding Palestine and U.S.-Iran relations.

- Institutional: Discuss the implications of the letter for Iranian authority and its position in global politics.

- Ideological: Analyze the ideological underpinnings of the letter, including themes of resistance, justice, and anti-Western sentiment.



### 1. Attaching significance:

In this letter, language is used for the purpose of defending the oppressed and the innocent and fighting against the wrong policies of the oppressors.

### 2. Doing actions:

In this letter, US students and young people are encouraged to defend and support the goals of the Palestinian resistance front, and their empathetic actions in the nationwide protests are praised. Also, the changing situation of the West Asian region is emphasized, and American youth and students are encouraged to support the always weak side of the Palestinian resistance.

### 3. Assuming and adopting identities to entities:

In this letter, two opposite identities are placed in front of each other. The first identity is related to the Muslims and the Palestine Axis of Resistance, which has been reduced to titles such as we are Muslims, the great Axis of Resistance, Oppressed children and women, residents of the independent land, the usurped land of Palestine, defenseless people of Palestine has been addressed. The other identity that is opposed to the first identity is the American government, the partners of the American government, the United States government, the British government, the Zionist leaders. In the meantime, American students are mentioned as a strong independent wise identity, and the letter tries to praise their support for the Palestinians and encourage them to show more empathy towards the Palestinians. This identity is therefore admired by the writer of the letter, who aims to violate and suppress the policies of the American government that support the Zionist regime.

Table 1. The main identities in the text of the letter

Identities	Frequencies	Reference
oppressed women and children of Gaza	1	Palestinian women and children
university students in the United States of America/ you	17	Young American students
Zionist regime	1	Israel Government
I	1	Ayatollah Khamenei
We/ our/ us	3	Muslims especially Iranian Muslims
England/ British government	2	English government
Resistance Front	5	The Axis of Resistance
Terrorists	3	Zionist regime
Palestine	3	Palestine
Islamic Republic of Iran	1	Islamic Republic of Iran

### 4. Forming, building, and developing relations/ relationships:

This letter tries to create a conflicting relationship between the identities that include the Palestinian state and the United States government, in the meantime, American students and young people who are inclined towards the Palestinian state are encouraged.

### 5. Adopting and specifying policies:

In this letter, the foreign policies of the United States and England and the diplomacy of Zionist leaders are considered as evil.

6. *Making connections:*

One of the goals of writing this letter is to establish a connection between the youth, American students, and the oppressed people of Palestine, as well as the ideals of the resistance front. By writing this letter, reconciliation is established between these two groups of people which seems to be separate and apparently strangers.

7. *Inserting sign system and knowledge systems:*

The semiotic system used in the text of this letter is the natural Persian language and the English language, the purpose of the Persian language is to communicate with the Persian-speaking audience inside Iran, and the purpose of the English language is to communicate with American students. There is also another purpose for the use of English in the text of the letter, which is that since English is universally considered an international language, in this way the letter can appeal to non-American audiences of other countries.

Then Gee comes up with this new idea that the analyst can take advantage of some theoretical means too:

1. *situated meaning:*

Words like *Zionist* and *Axis of Resistance*, which can be used in the political context of the Palestinian land, are meaningful words that have a situational meaning, as well as words like *Leaders* and *partners* possess contextual meaning conveying power and Complicity in conspiracy respectively.

2. *social languages:* political, or even forensic language and terminology has been used here. The formal standard English language as the native tongue of the American students has been used here.

3. *intertextuality:* Since two verses of the Holy Qur'an are mentioned in the thesis, it is possible to find connections between the teachings and moral principles of the Holy Qur'an and the text of the letter as depicted in "So be steadfast as you have been commanded" and "Do not oppress and do not be oppressed".

4. *figured world:* Because in the text of the letter, concepts and social goods that have positive values, such as justice, peace, tranquility and defense of the concept of justice, are proposed and the world is in opposition to each other, a world in which everything is in its proper place and in which justice, peace, tranquility and justice prevail and the world which is idealistically described. This ideal world is in contrast with the real world in which the Palestinian society lives in war, does not enjoy peace, and there is no justice and fairness for it.

5. *Discourse:* In the text of this letter, values such as creative conscience, peace, justice, tranquility and defending the rights of the oppressed are praised

6. *Controversies:* The text of this article considers the war crisis in Palestine and instability in the Middle East region as well as the oppression of Palestinians as conflicts of a global format.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

Political letters are significant artifacts of leadership communication, offering insights into historical contexts, emotional appeals, and policy narratives. Through discourse analysis, we can uncover the rhetorical strategies, power dynamics, and cultural frameworks embedded within these texts. Such analysis deepens our understanding of political communication and its broader societal impact. The letter under discussion advocates for the rights of the Palestinian nation, aiming to inspire American students and promote a global sense of justice. It employs language that constructs a binary between the oppressed and the oppressor. Positive lexical choices are used to portray the Palestinian people and their struggle, including phrases such as “the awakened conscience,” “children and oppressed women,” “the honorable struggle,” “the great axis of resistance,” “the independent land with a long history,” “the usurped land of Palestine,” “defenseless people,” “continuous oppression,” and “humane and brave resistance”. Conversely, the letter uses strongly negative language to describe the Zionist regime, reinforcing its role as the oppressor. Terms include: “the ruthless flow of the usurping,” “ruthless regime,” “terrorist and ruthless network,” “occupation,” “pressure,” “torture,” “genocide,” “oppressive behavior,” “ruthlessness,” “Zionist occupiers,” “terror,” and “suppression”. This strategic use of emotionally charged vocabulary serves to frame the conflict in stark moral terms, shaping readers' perceptions and mobilizing political sentiment.

Figure 1. below illustrates the foregrounded topics, constructed identities, and dominant conversations within the letter text:

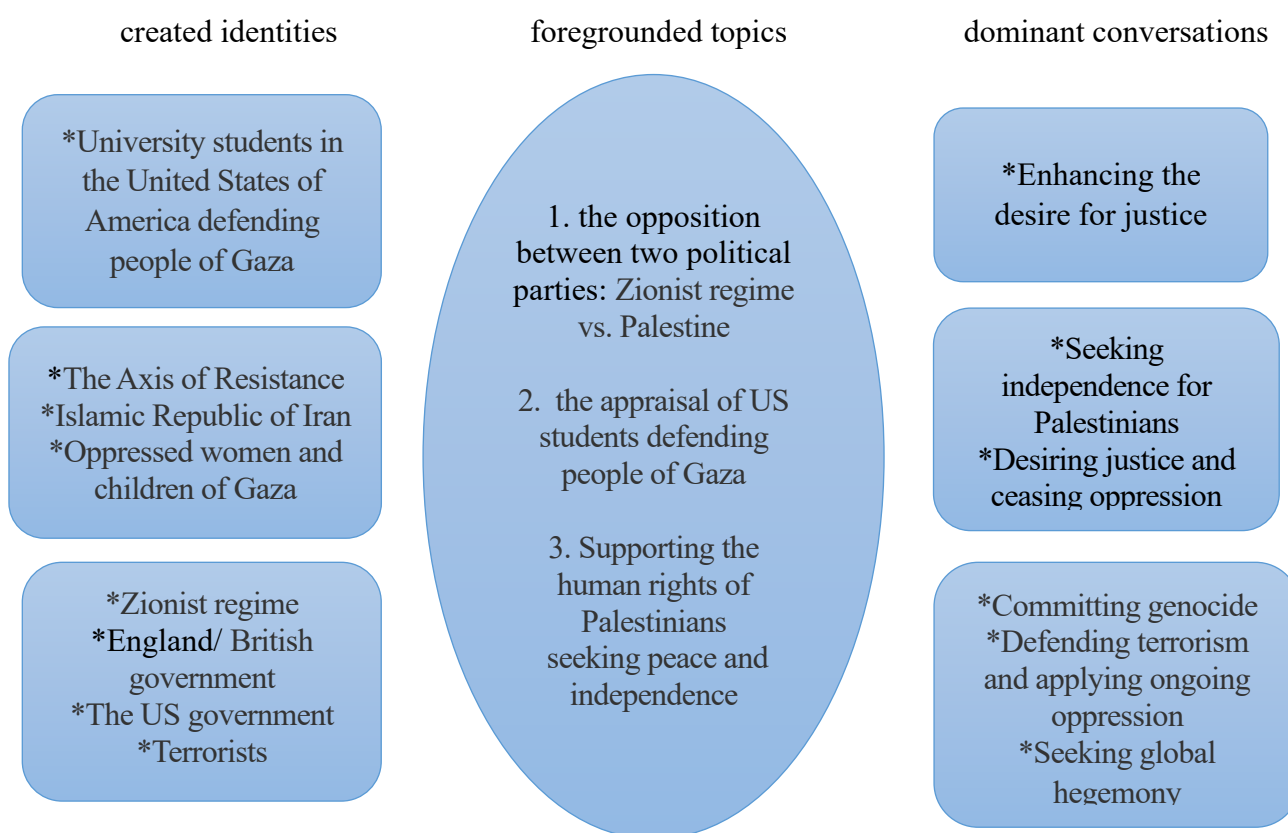


Figure 1. The illustration of foregrounded topics, created identities, and dominant conversations in the letter text

The letter presents several key themes that reflect its broader political and rhetorical aims. Foremost is solidarity with the Palestinian cause, as the text underscores the importance of standing with the Palestinian people and highlights the moral and political dimensions of this support. It also includes a pointed critique of Western policies, particularly targeting the United States for its role in Middle Eastern affairs and its support of Israel. Another central theme is the empowerment of youth, with a clear call to action directed at young people—especially students—encouraging them to engage in social justice movements and resist oppression. The letter's impact on public opinion is particularly notable in two areas: it seeks to influence the perceptions of American university students, challenging their views on U.S. foreign policy and the Palestinian struggle, while also aiming to resonate with a broader international audience, potentially contributing to global discourse surrounding justice, resistance, and the future of Palestine.

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## Cultural and Linguistic Context in Lexical Equivalence: A Comparative Study of Five English Translations of the Holy Qur'ān

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the role of context in the selection of equivalents by translators with diverse worldviews, following the framework of Lotfi Gaskaree et al. (2023). A qualitative research design was employed, and verses were selected using purposive sampling. Five widely known English translations of the Holy Qur'ān were analyzed. The data encompassed nine Surahs, which were semantically analyzed to investigate the variation in lexical equivalents across the selected versions. The study focused on understanding the translators' perspectives in selecting English equivalents for Qur'ānic vocabulary. Specifically, translations of Surah Al-Baqarah were examined, as rendered by Arberry, Shakir, Pickthall, and Yusuf Ali. Selected excerpts from each version were analyzed to explore differences in the Arabic-to-English lexical choices. Findings revealed notable differences in the translators' degrees of familiarity and intimacy with Islamic and religious concepts. Translators influenced by Western worldviews tended to favor literal translations at the morphemic level, while those with Eastern perspectives leaned toward more meaningful or communicative translations. These variations highlight that English lexical choices in Qur'ānic translations are heavily context-bound and influenced by the translators' cultural and ideological affiliations. The study acknowledges a limitation in the sample size, noting that a broader dataset exceeding nine Surahs could yield more comprehensive insights. Nonetheless, the findings offer valuable implications for cross-cultural translation theory, demonstrating that translators from different cultural backgrounds select lexical equivalents based on their worldviews. This study serves as a preliminary contribution to further semantic and contextual research in Qur'ānic translation.

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## 1. Introduction

Context plays a vital role in the comprehension of language and communication. In the realm of translation, a deep understanding of the context in which a word or sentence appears is essential for accurately conveying the intended meaning. This process involves not only analyzing the linguistic elements but also considering the cultural, social, and historical factors that shape interpretation. By thoroughly examining the background of the source text (ST), translators can capture the nuances and subtleties embedded in the original message. Such attention to contextual detail distinguishes a successful translation from a mere word-for-word rendering.

In essence, context serves as a bridge between the source and target languages, enabling a more accurate and meaningful transfer of information. Linguistic context, in particular, refers to the surrounding linguistic elements that influence the interpretation of a word, phrase, or sentence. No word exists in isolation; rather, words interact within a broader textual framework, and this interaction ultimately shapes meaning. For example, consider a word from Surah Al-Imran, verse 185 (see Excerpt 1). Arberry translates the term as “wage”, while Shakir uses “reward”, highlighting how different linguistic contexts inform lexical choices. The key distinction between “wage” and “reward” lies in the nature of compensation. A “wage” typically refers to a fixed payment given for work over a specific period, whereas a “reward” implies compensation based on merit or performance. Thus, the choice of one term over the other carries different connotations, emphasizing how context guides translators in capturing both literal and implied meanings.

A sentence is often regarded as the basic unit of translation. However, this does not imply that sentence-for-sentence translation equates to element-for-element substitution (Lotfi Gaskaree et al., 2023). According to Lotfi Gaskaree et al., context-bound translation equips translators with both semantic and pragmatic cues, enabling them to render precise or near-equivalents in the target text (TT). Linguistically relevant features may not always contribute directly to the communicative function of an utterance, but they still reflect the structural characteristics of the source or target language. A context-bound translation framework proves particularly effective in cross-cultural translation, where literal renderings may fail to capture cultural nuance. Other translation theories have also highlighted the importance of context in determining equivalents. Nida’s (1964) theory of dynamic equivalence and Toury’s (1995) descriptive translation studies both stress the pragmatic dimension of language in translation. Nida and Taber (1969) emphasized meaning and effect over formal correspondence, advocating for translations that reflect the intended impact on the target audience. Similarly, Toury’s descriptive translation studies theory adopts an empirical, target-oriented approach that analyzes existing translations, viewing translation as a culturally and socially embedded practice rather than a prescriptive process.

According to Peachy (2013), translating any literary text, such as the Holy Qur’ān, from its original language into another requires not only advanced proficiency in both languages but also a deep understanding of their respective literatures and cultures. Each language functions as a unique relational system, wherein linguistic units (such as sounds, words, and meanings) derive their identity and significance from their relationships with other units within the same language system. These units do not possess inherent or independent meaning outside of this network. Rather, they serve as points of reference within a structured system of relations, and their interpretation is contextually bound to the linguistic and cultural framework in which they operate.

The interpretation of a sentence or utterance is shaped by the speaker's intended effect on the listener, often conveyed through adherence to social conventions (Obeidat et al., 2020). Intentional, communicative, and conventional speech acts are heavily influenced by the specific circumstances in which they occur. During social interactions, interlocutors face various constraints that affect their use of language. As a result, linguistic utterances may be interpreted differently depending on contextual factors and communicative goals. Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, examines elements such as implicature, presupposition, illocutionary force, and deixis. In essence, pragmatics incorporates both linguistic knowledge and extra-linguistic (encyclopedic) knowledge to fully interpret meaning in context. It bridges the gap between language form and language use, emphasizing how meaning is shaped by situational and cultural context.

Translators of the Holy Qur'ān must apply appropriate translation techniques and procedures when dealing with micro-translation units, whether at the word, phrase, clause, or sentence level. The acceptability of a Qur'ānic translation depends on fulfilling several key aspects: accuracy, clarity, naturalness, relevance, and the preservation of pragmatic meaning. Consequently, the translator bears the responsibility of ensuring acceptable equivalence between the source language and the target language, whether in terms of form, meaning, or intended meaning. Translation failure—or untranslatability—occurs when it becomes impossible to reproduce functionally relevant features of the original text within the contextual meaning of the target language. When the target language lacks formal or structural equivalents, certain texts or items become untranslatable, resulting from fundamental differences in the linguistic substance of the source language and the target language. To address this, the translator must grasp the essence of each sentence within its co-text and context—that is, in relation to the sentences that precede or follow it, as well as the broader physical and extra-linguistic factors. This understanding should then be expressed in the target language without resorting to element-for-element replacement or overly rigid adherence to the source form (Ahoud Aldhafeeri, 2022).

There is no direct one-to-one correspondence between elements of the source and target languages; in other words, source language units cannot simply be replaced by their supposed equivalents in the target language. This is due to inherent differences in linguistic form and substance, including variations in denotational and collocational ranges, as well as figurative and idiomatic usage. As Obeidat et al. (2020) note, different text types and translation purposes necessitate the use of different strategies. Cultural untranslatability arises when a situational feature that is functionally appropriate in the source language text does not exist in the culture associated with the target language. In such cases, the translator faces the challenge of rendering meaning in a way that preserves functional equivalence, even when a direct cultural counterpart is lacking.

The purpose of this study is to compare selected lexical equivalents of expressions in the Holy Qur'ān in order to examine translators' approaches to rendering appropriate translations. Among the various forms of language variation, not all are equally evident in the translation process. In particular, style, register, and social varieties play a significant role in shaping translation choices. To effectively represent the source language variety, a word-for-word translation is often insufficient. Once the translator identifies the variety present in the ST, they must determine how such variation can be appropriately realized in the target language. This is crucial because linguistic variety carries both meaning and sociocultural value. Therefore, the translator must strive to reflect the source language

variety in the target language to preserve the communicative and cultural significance embedded in the original (Imran Khan, 2016).

Denotatively identical lexical items across languages often differ in their lexical forms and layers of meaning. They vary in their lexicalization strategies and employ diverse grammatical devices to express the same concepts. These differences can be characterized in terms of connotative and stylistic meaning (Al-Awd, 2024). The quality of a translation improves as the number of situational features shared by both the ST and TT increases. The speaker's intended meaning is inherently tied to contextual meaning, and the choices and intentions of language users significantly impact effective communication.

The research gap addressed in this study concerns the underexplored influence of translators' worldviews on their selection of lexical equivalents in nine Surahs across five different English translations of the Holy Qur'ān. Existing English translations often struggle to accurately convey the messages of the Arabic ST. This difficulty arises partly from translators' insufficient familiarity with either the source or target languages, resulting in a lack of mastery over the subject matter and content. Such deficiencies are evident in both the comprehension of the source language and the transfer of meaning into the target language. To investigate the variations in lexical equivalence across these well-known translated versions, the following research question is proposed:

**RQ:** How do translators' cultural worldviews influence lexical equivalence in Qur'ānic translations?

## **2. Methodology**

A comparative, corpus-based approach was employed to analyze English and Arabic equivalents in nine Surahs of the Holy Qur'ān. This approach was chosen to investigate how translators' worldviews influence their strategies for rendering the same words in the TT. Data were selected through purposive sampling from among the 114 Surahs. Five widely used English translations of the Holy Qur'ān, all published in the 20th century, were non-randomly selected for this study: Rodwell (1974), Pickthall (1930), Yusuf Ali (1977), Arberry (1972), and Shakir (1982). These versions were chosen primarily based on their popularity in university translation courses. Students enrolled in courses such as "Review of Translated Islamic Texts I and II" study these translations to learn how to render Qur'ānic verses and critically evaluate the quality of equivalents across different versions. Rendering contextually and culturally appropriate equivalents is a central focus of these courses, making these five translations foundational teaching materials. Ethical considerations guided the selection process to ensure the inclusion of versions translated by both Eastern and Western translators, providing a balanced perspective for comparison.

### *2.1. Data Collection Procedure*

Data were collected based on the above-mentioned versions of the English versions of the translated Holy Qur'ān that are popular among other versions. They were regarded as the corpus that is compared and contrasted following Lotfi Gaskaree et al (2023). The comparison and contrast were made from linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic perspectives. The purpose of comparing the translated texts was to display the main differences in translations regarding meaning, style, and message. The selected verses for comparison were purposive, but all the verses were checked in the five copies by the researcher and his colleague to arrive at the reliance on qualitative comparisons with the intercoder reliability

index. The result of the intercoder reliability indicated an agreement with the value of 95 percent based on Pearson Correlation Analysis. Thus, the data were analyzed via two main criteria, including Western vs. Eastern cultural backgrounds and frequency of contested terms. All the bodies of the compared verses are not used in the excerpts of the article since the space of the article is very limited. More than 250 verses were examined to check the comparisons of ST and TT. But some of them are presented in the paper.

It should be noted that if the principles of translation can be taken into account, the most frequently translated texts use the literal translation. There are various types of translation, including literal, formal (grammatical), semantic, dynamic, communicative, and free. Most of the translations of the Holy Qur'ān (from literal to free) have remained unchanged in their literal translation. e.g., in the translation of the chapter 'Al-Kosar', Shakir translated it as 'the Heavy Fountain'. While Shakir presented its phonetic translation, 'Al-Kauthar'. Also, in finding the English equivalent for the Arabic word 'Aye', Arberry used the equivalent 'Sigh'. But Shakir employed 'Communication'. Accordingly, we may regard the varieties of Islamic translation styles as types of translation continuum in Islamic text, ranging between literal, contextual, and free translations displayed in Figure 1.

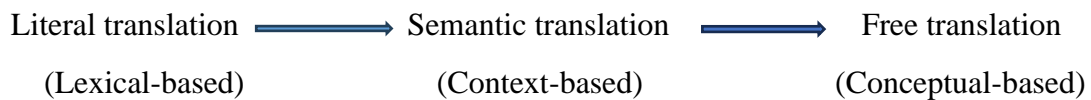


Figure 1. Types of Translation Continuum in Islamic Texts

### 3. Results

Tables 1 to 4 present several excerpts illustrating the variations in vocabulary equivalents related to the translators' Western and Eastern worldviews. These samples are drawn from nine Surahs. By examining the English translations of the Glorious Qur'ān by Rodwell, Arberry, and other translators who were not native Arabic speakers, we observe differing interpretations at both the sentence and text levels. This lack of native proficiency often leads to misinterpretations of key lexicons and results in literal translations. In this type of translation—considered a subfield of linguistics—translators transfer structural elements from the source language to the target language, frequently neglecting the semantic depth of the Qur'ānic texts. The following excerpts (see excerpts 1 to 4) have been selected to highlight the importance of preserving meaning within context. Bold-faced words and phrases emphasize the variety of lexical equivalents.

As Excerpt 1 illustrates, in the first example Arberry and Shakir translated “أَجُورُكُمْ” as “be paid in full wages” and “paid fully your reward.” In the second sample, they used “God-fearing” and “guard against evil” as verbs for “وَتَتَّقُوا”, and “surely that is true constancy” and “surely this is one of the affairs which should be determined upon” for the original Arabic “فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ”. In the third example, they both use the same translation: “whenever you may be, death will overtake you” for the clause “إِنَّمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ”. For the fourth sample, Arberry translated “وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا” to English as “God suffices for a witness.” He tends to use verbs rather than adjectives, as in Shakir’s “Allah is sufficient as a witness.” For the verse “وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُهَا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ”, Arberry gave the equivalent “Yet it may happen that you will hate a thing which is better for you,” using a comparative adjective. But Shakir translated it as “And it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you.” For the sixth sample, they used “upon those” and “those on whom” for the Arabic “أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ” in “...أُولَئِكَ

”عللهم صلوات من ربيهم ورحمة”. In the last example, for the Arabic “رَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضِ دَرَجَاتٍ”, Arberry employed “raised some of you in rank,” and Shakir used the phrase “raised by various grades.”

Table 1. Arberry’s and Shakir’s English Translations of Verses (Excerpt 1)

Arberry’s Translation	Shakir’s Translation	Verses
1. You shall surely be paid in full <b>wages</b> on the Day of Resurrection	1. <b>and</b> you shall only be paid fully your <b>reward</b> on the resurrection day	«...وَأَنَّمَا تُوفُونَ أَجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ...» (آل عمران: ١٨٥)
2. but if you are patient and <b>God-fearing</b> , surely that is true <b>constancy</b>	2. and if you are patient and <b>guard against evil</b> , surely this is one of the affairs which should be <b>determined</b> upon	«...وَإِن تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَفَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ...» (آل عمران: ١٨٦)
3. Whenever you <b>may be</b> , death will overtake you	3. Whenever <b>you are</b> , death will overtake you	«أَيَّمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ...» (النساء: ٧٨)
4. <b>God</b> suffices for a witness	4. and <b>Allah</b> is sufficient as a witness	«...وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا» (النساء: ٧٩)
5. <b>Yet</b> it may happen that you will <b>hate</b> a thing which is <b>better</b> for you	5. <b>and</b> it may be that you <b>dislike</b> a thing while it is <b>good</b> for you	«...وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ...» (آل البقرة: ٢١٦)
6. <b>upon those</b> rest blessings and mercy from their Lord,	6. Those are they <b>on whom</b> are blessings and mercy from their Lord,	«...أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ...» (البقرة: ١٥٧)
7. and has raised some of you in <b>rank</b> above others, that He <b>may</b> try you in what He has given you.	7. and raised some of you above others by various <b>grades</b> , that He <b>might</b> try you by what He has given you.	«... وَ رَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضِ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ...» (الأنعام: ١٦٥)

In the second excerpt, we observe that Arberry used “and made them testify touching themselves, ‘Am I not your Lord?’” while Yusuf Ali rendered it as “and made them testify concerning themselves, ‘Am I not your Lord who cherishes and sustains you?’” for the Arabic “...وَأَشْهَدُهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمِ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ...”. For the phrase “تَفْصِيلَ الْآيَاتِ” in the second sample, they provided the English equivalents: “distinguish the signs” and “explain the signs in detail.” Arberry and Yusuf Ali translated the Arabic “لَا تُضَارَ بِوَلَدِهَا” as “pressed for her child” and “treated unfairly on account of his child,” respectively. As seen in the sixth sample, Arberry rendered the sentence “...لَا نَكْلِفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا...” as “We charge not any soul save to its capacity,” whereas Yusuf Ali translated it as “No burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear.” In the fourth sample, they translated the phrase “...تَسْتَرْضِعُونَ أَوْلَادَكُمْ...” as “nursing for your children” and “foster-mother for your offspring,” respectively. In the

seventh example, “God’s covenant” and “the covenant of Allah” were given for the Arabic phrase “بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ”.

Table 2. Arberry’s and Yusuf Ali’s English Translations of Verses (Excerpt 2)

Arberry’s Translation	Yusuf Ali’s Translation	Verses
1. and made them testify touching themselves,” Am <b>I not</b> your Lord?”	1. and made them testify concerning themselves, “ <b>Am I not</b> your Lord who cherishes and sustains you?”	«... وَ أَشْهَدُهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ...» (الاعراف: ١٧٢)
2. So we <b>distinguish</b> the signs; and haply they will return.	2. Thus do we <b>explain</b> the signs in detail! and perchance they may turn unto us.	«... وَ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ وَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ...» (الاعراف: ١٧٤)
3. a mother shall not be <b>pressed</b> for her child	3. no mother shall be <b>treated</b> unfairly on account of his child	لَا تُضَارَّ وِلْدَهُ بِوَالِدِهَا...» (البقره: ٢٣٣)
4. And if you desire to seek <b>nursing</b> for your children	4. If ye decide on a <b>foster-mother</b> for your offspring	«...وَ إِن أَرَادْتُمْ أَنْ تُسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ...» (البقره: ٢٣٣)
5. and that you slay not the soul God has forbidden, except <b>by right</b> .	5. take not life, which Allah hath made sacred, except <b>by way of justice and law</b>	«... وَ لَا تَقْتُلُوا لِنَفْسٍ أَلْحَمَ اللَّهُ الْبَالِغِ...» (الأنعام: ١٥١)
6. We charge not any soul save to its <b>capacity</b> .	6.No burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can <b>bear</b> .	«... لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا...» (الأنعام: ١٥٢)
7. And fulfil <b>God’s</b> covenant	7.and fulfill the covenant of <b>Allah</b> .	«... وَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا...» (الأنعام: ١٥٢)

The third excerpt shows that Arberry and Pickthall had different lexicalizations in their translations. In the first sample, they used “wage and sorrow” and “reward and grieve” for the Arabic words “أَجْرٌ” and “يُجْزُونَ”. In the next example, Arberry translated the sentence “...قَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَدَى...” as “Honourable words and forgiveness are better than a freewill offering followed by injury,” while Pickthall rendered it as “A kind word with forgiveness is better than almsgiving followed by injury.” For the third sentence, “... وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ...”, both translators used the same equivalent: “and God is All-embracing and All-knowing.” In sample four, Arberry and Pickthall translated the Arabic word “فَيَعْمًا” as “excellent” and “well,” respectively. For the Arabic adverbs “سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً”, they used “secretly and in public” and “stealth and openly.” In the sixth example, they shared the same equivalent—“He is the best of providers”—for the Arabic “... وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ...”. In the final sample, for the Arabic verb “تُنْفِقُوا”, Arberry used “expend,” while Pickthall used “spend”.

Table 3. Arberry's and Pickthall's English Translations of Verses (Excerpt 3)

Arberry's Translation	Pickthall's Translation	Verses
1.Their <b>wage</b> is with their Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they <b>sorrow</b> .	1.Their <b>reward</b> is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they <b>grieve</b> .	«...لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ لَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ» (البقره: ٢٦٢)
2.Honourable words and forgiveness, are better than a <b>freewill offering</b> followed by injury.	2. A kind word with forgiveness is better than <b>almsgiving</b> followed by injury	«...قَوْلَ مَعْرُوفٍ وَ مَغْفِرَةً خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذَى...» (البقره: ٢٦٣)
3. and <b>God</b> is All-embracing and All-knowing	3. <b>Allah</b> is All-embracing and All-knowing	«... وَ اللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ» (البقره: ٢٦٨)
4. If you publish your freewill offering is excellent; but if you <b>conceal</b> them, and give them to the poor that is better for you.	4. If ye publish your almsgiving, it is well, but if ye <b>hide</b> it and give it to the poor, it will be better for you.	«لَنْ تُبَدُّوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعْمًا هِيَ وَ لَنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَ تُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ...» (البقره: ٢٧١)
5.Those who expend their wealth night and day, <b>secretly and in public</b> ,	5. Those who spend their wealth by night and day, by <b>stealth and openly</b> ,	«الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَ عَلَانِيَةً...» (البقره: ٢٧٤)
6.He is the <b>best</b> of providers.	6. And He is the <b>Best</b> of providers.	«... وَ هُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ» (سبأ: ٣٩)
7. You will not attain piety until you <b>expend</b> of what you love.	7. You will attain unto piety until ye <b>spend</b> of that which ye love.	«لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ...» (آل عمران: ٩٢)

Arberry and Rodwell translated the verb “يَقِيمُونَ” in the first example as “perform” and “observe,” respectively. In the next, they used “Hereafter” and “the life to come” for the Arabic equivalent “بِالْآخِرَةِ”. In the third verse, “وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا”, Arberry presented the translation “and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another,” while Rodwell rendered it as “and We have divided you into peoples and tribes that you might know one another.” The fourth example, “قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ”, was translated by Arberry as “Say: If men and jinn banded together to produce the like of this Koran, they would never produce its like,” and by Rodwell as “And say: Verily, were men and Djinn assembled to produce the like of this Koran, they could not produce its like.” For the sentence “...وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ”, Arberry translated it as “falsehood has vanished away,” while Rodwell wrote “falsehood is vanished”. For the verse “يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ”, both translators provided similar renderings: “O men, fear ye your Lord.” In the final example, “وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ”, Arberry translated it as “no soul knows what it shall earn tomorrow,” while Rodwell offered “but no soul knoweth what it shall have gotten on the morrow.”



Table 4. Arberry's and Rodwell's English Translations of Verses (Excerpt 4)

Arberry's Translation	Rodwell's Translation	Verses
1. who believe in the Unseen and <b>perform</b> the prayers,	1. who believe in the unseen, who <b>observe</b> prayers	«...لَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ...» (البقرة: ٣)
2. and have faith in <b>the Hereafter</b> ;	2. and full faith have they in <b>the life to come</b> ;	«و...بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ» (البقرة: ٤)
3. and appointed you races and tribes, that you may <b>know</b> one another.	3. and we have divided you into peoples and tribes that you might <b>have knowledge</b> one of another.	«و...جَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا...» (الحجرات: ١٣)
4. Say: if men and jinn <b>banded together</b> to produce the like of this Koran, they would never produce its like.	4. Say: Verily, were men and Djinn <b>assembled</b> to produce the like of this Koran, they could not produce its like	«قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذِهِ الْقُرْآنِ» (الأسراء: ٨٨)
5. and say: <b>The truth</b> has come, and falsehood has vanished away;	5. and say: <b>truth</b> is come and falsehood is vanished	«وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ...» (الأسراء: ٨١)
6. O men, fear <b>your</b> Lord,	6. O men, fear <b>ye</b> your Lord,	«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ» (البقرة: ٣٣)
7. no soul knows what it shall <b>earn</b> tomorrow;	7. but no soul knoweth what it shall <b>have gotten</b> on the tomorrow;	«وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ» (البقرة: ٣٤)

## 5. Discussion

The research question explores how translators' cultural worldviews influence lexical equivalence in Qur'ānic translations. One significant challenge in translating the lexical items of the Holy Qur'ān lies in their context-bound nature. Factors such as time, place, and historical events can affect the selection of lexical equivalents by translators. Another layer of complexity arises from differing Islamic translation styles, which can be viewed as existing along a continuum, as illustrated in Figure 1. Additionally, translators with Islamic backgrounds may tend to select more accurate equivalents, although this may occur without accounting for certain confounding variables.

This distinction is reflected in the study's findings, where Western translators often favored literal translation more than their Eastern counterparts. Literal, context-bound, and free (or communicative) translations occupy different positions on a spectrum of strategies used to convey Islamic terminology in the target language. Among these, semantic translation is often regarded as a more reliable style of Qur'ānic interpretation, as it prioritizes conveying the meaning of the text over a word-for-word rendering. By focusing on contextual meaning, translators can ensure that the overarching message of the Qur'ān is effectively communicated to a broader audience, taking into account the specific circumstances in which the verses were revealed. The study's results suggest that a context-

bound approach can be considered a successful translation strategy, as it involves a careful analysis of each word's meaning within its original context, along with an awareness of how context shapes lexical choices in the target language. Through such deliberate consideration, translators are better positioned to maintain high translation quality and faithfully preserve the message of the Holy Qur'ān. Therefore, context-bound translation emerges as a highly appropriate method for rendering Qur'ānic expressions. In contrast, free or communicative translations—focused on conveying general concepts—may result in less accurate equivalents, as the interpretive nature of such translations can distort intended meanings. Arberry's translation, for instance, exemplifies a more communicative style in which meanings are conveyed without strict adherence to the original context of the words.

What makes the differences in the comprehension of Qur'ānic words and expressions more significant is the issue of lexical ambiguity. Analyzing various translations reveals that when translators encounter objective lexicons, they tend to choose denotative meanings over connotative ones. For example, in the case of the Arabic word "Al-ʿAnkabūt" (The Spider) in the chapter titled Al-ʿAnkabūt, all translators uniformly rendered it as "The Spider", reflecting a clear and unambiguous term. However, the main difficulty arises when translators face subjective or abstract terms. In such cases, they often resort to connotative meanings, primarily due to unfamiliarity with the deeper semantic layers of the word or uncertainty surrounding its ambiguity. This results in divergent translations, influenced by the translators' varying religious, cultural, or scientific backgrounds. A notable example is the word "Al-Qadr" in the chapter Al-Qadr. Arberry and Shakir provided different equivalents such as "Determination", "Power", and "The Majesty", reflecting the layered and interpretive nature of the term. In contrast, for more concrete and universally understood terms, such as "Al-Tīn" in the chapter Al-Tīn, all translators consistently agreed on the English equivalent "The Fig".

There is no doubt that one of the fundamental principles of translation is mastery of the source language, the target language, and the subject matter of the text. In the case of Qur'ānic translation, accurate recognition and comprehension of the text require the translator to possess a high level of proficiency in both Arabic and English, as well as an understanding of the cultural and linguistic relationships between the two languages. Without such mastery, it becomes extremely difficult to convey the concepts of the Holy Qur'ān accurately and meaningfully. Beyond linguistic proficiency, the translator must also be well-versed in religious and Islamic texts, including prayers, divine commands, supplications, blessings, and classical Qur'ānic exegesis (tafsīr). Familiarity with these elements is essential for capturing the depth and spiritual nuance of the original. Additionally, the translator must be able to identify appropriate religious equivalents in the target language to maintain theological and doctrinal integrity (Alhaj, 2021).

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Additionally, the translator must be able to identify appropriate religious equivalents in the target language to maintain theological and doctrinal integrity (Alhaj, 2021).

The adoption of appropriate lexical equivalents is closely tied to context-bound translation, which plays a crucial role in conveying the intended meanings of the Holy Qur'ān. The analysis of the excerpts suggests that many translators of the Qur'ān may lack sufficient background in religious, scientific, and interpretive Islamic traditions. As a result, they may fail to grasp the implicative or deeper meanings of certain words, often resorting to formal or literal translations, as observed in the work of Arberry. In such cases, the equivalents are translated word-for-word, and the broader contextual and cultural nuances are lost in the target language. In contrast, translators with Islamic backgrounds, such as Shakir and Yusuf Ali, tend to provide more accurate and appropriate equivalents. For instance, in translating the term "Al-'Asr" in the chapter Al-'Asr, Arberry and Shakir offer the renderings "Afternoon" and "Time," respectively—both literal interpretations that may fall short of capturing the full theological and temporal implications embedded in the original Arabic.

Another issue arises when different translators assign varying equivalents to the same word, resulting in inconsistent interpretations. For example, the word "Al-Takwīr" in the chapter "At-Takwīr" has been rendered as "The Folding," "The Darkening," "The Overthrowing," and "The Covering Up" by Arberry, Pickthall, and Shakir. Each of these translations reflects a different understanding and interpretation of the term. Consequently, for English-speaking readers, such inconsistencies can lead to confusion and make it difficult to discern the precise and intended meaning of "Al-Takwīr" in its Qur'ānic context.

These examples highlight how differing linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds of translators significantly influence their lexical choices. They also reinforce the importance of context-bound translation in ensuring that the richness and depth of the Qur'ānic message are faithfully conveyed to readers in the target language.

Context-bound translation offers a practical solution to the challenges posed by suggested meanings in Qur'ānic interpretation. This approach acknowledges the polysemous nature of certain Arabic words, which often leads to vagueness and ambiguity in translation. By taking into account the cultural and linguistic context of the original text, context-bound translation ensures a more accurate rendering of Qur'ānic expressions. One strategy employed within this approach is the use of phonetic transliteration, particularly for words that lack direct equivalents in English. For example, Shakir uses the phonetic form "Al-Takwir" instead of translating the term "Takvir", thereby preserving both the sanctity and original form of the word.

Although phonetics is not, in itself, a form of translation, it can serve an important supplementary function. Through the use of explanatory footnotes, the translator can provide readers with the intended meaning of the transliterated term. Proponents of this method argue that transliteration upholds the holiness and authenticity of Islamic and Qur'ānic concepts—especially in cases where a direct English equivalent is absent or inadequate. In such contexts, phonetics is not only inevitable but also respectful of the ST's sacred nature.

There is no doubt that one of the fundamental principles of translation is mastery of the source and target languages, as well as deep knowledge of the subject matter. In the context of Qur'ānic translation, this means that the translator must have a thorough command of both Arabic and English, including an understanding of their respective cultural frameworks.

Without such linguistic and cultural competence, accurately conveying the Qur'ān's complex meanings becomes exceedingly difficult.

Moreover, the translator should be well-versed in Islamic scholarship, including Qur'ānic interpretation (tafsir), prayers, divine injunctions, blessings, and the stylistic and performative dimensions of religious language. In the target language—here, English—the translator must be able to identify or formulate religious equivalents that convey not just the literal, but also the semantic, emotive, and performative aspects of the original expressions. As Abdelaal and Rashid (2015) argue, while it may be possible for a translator working from a foreign language into their native language to compensate for linguistic gaps with partial familiarity, translating from a native language into a foreign one requires complete mastery of both languages. This is particularly true in religious texts, where precision and nuance are essential.

Literal translation of the Holy Qur'ān, combined with a lack of mastery of the target language, often leads to significant problems. Translators who possess sufficient linguistic knowledge of Arabic—whether as their native or a second language—demonstrate a clearer understanding, as seen in the translations of Shakir and Yusuf Ali compared to those of Arberry and Rodwell. Literal translation faces challenges in accurately interpreting and conveying the messages of the Qur'ānic texts, regardless of whether the translator's language is Arabic or English, and even if they are not bilingual. A successful translator must consider all fundamental principles of translation. Their goal is to reproduce in the target reader the same impact that the original text's author creates in the source language reader. Achieving this requires multiple competencies, including linguistic expertise, subject-matter knowledge, familiarity with the conventions governing speech acts and language use, and sensitivity to social interactions, cultural norms, and values.

The results of the study indicate two distinct translation processes: first, reading and comprehending the ST (Arabic); second, conveying its message in the target language. The first process involves deep engagement with the text—structural, semantic, and performative comprehension occurs mentally within the translator. The second process requires reconstructing and expressing the understood message in the target language. These two stages are more complex and delicate in Qur'ānic translation than in literary or nonliterary translation because divine revelation and the speech of the Lord are considered fundamentally untranslatable. Interpretation inevitably depends on the translator's linguistic competence, even if this can only be achieved partially. Constructing and organizing the divine text in a language other than Arabic is a complex and challenging task. Interpreters and translators hold varying perspectives on how to comprehend the connotative meanings of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān. This Sacred Book was revealed over fourteen hundred years ago, and many of the difficulties stem from early interpreters and translators of the divine speech. Additional challenges arise from metalinguistic factors related to the reverence of the Qur'ānic revelation, as well as the regional, political, social, and economic contexts of the Muslim community fourteen centuries ago, along with their interactions with other religions—elements essential for understanding and accurately translating religious texts.

Literal and semantic translations that overlook these metalinguistic and pragmatic dimensions often cause confusion among English readers, hindering their comprehension of the Qur'ānic message. Another factor impacting the quality of English translations of the Glorious Qur'ān is the nature of performative expression. While the Sacred Book conveys an expressive tone in the source language, this is frequently replaced by a purely informative

tone in the target language. This discrepancy may be due to the unique stylistic features of the Qur'ānic text. Transferring the rhythm, emotional depth, and spiritual resonance of the original Arabic, experienced by Arabic or Persian Muslims, is nearly impossible in English translation. As a result, the emotive power and richness of historical and religious events are often diminished or lost. Many translations thus neglect the metalinguistic dimension essential to conveying the divine message fully.

Underlying these difficulties is often a lack of familiarity with the Islamic background, which profoundly affects understanding the ST's messages. This gap explains why many translators struggle despite their mastery of the target language. If the translator of the Holy Qur'ān is a bilingual Muslim equipped with the necessary qualifications, they must address a third critical challenge: the linguistic and metalinguistic differences between Arabic and English. Successfully overcoming these barriers is key to faithfully transferring all aspects of the Glorious Qur'ān's verses into the target language.

## **6. Conclusion**

Since translators generally agree that no translation of the Holy Qur'ān is entirely complete, various styles and approaches to its translation exist. This aligns with the view of Lotfi Gaskaree et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of finding the closest meaning to the original equivalents. This perspective is particularly applicable to the translation of the Holy Qur'ān, a divine Book that transcends human speech. As a miracle from the LORD, it possesses a unique dignity of revelation, making translation especially challenging. Many experts maintain that the magnificent Qur'ān is ultimately untranslatable, and even when translated, some degree of deficiency is inevitable.

Some translators, such as Shakir, have focused primarily on transferring lexical structures, employing semantic translation approaches that have proven more successful than literal translations. However, communicative translations, which require greater creativity on the part of the translator, remain largely absent.

From a pedagogical standpoint, this study suggests that translation courses should emphasize lexical, structural, and discursal equivalences between the ST and TT to enable comparison and critical analysis. Certain bilingual sourcebooks, such as Elahi Ghomsheie's (1991), expose students to translations by both native and non-native translators, though these materials are not without limitations. A significant problem lies in selecting appropriate methods and techniques for teaching these texts. Often, such sourcebooks lack guided translation exercises or creative activities, resulting in professors relying on personal teaching methods without a strong theoretical or empirical foundation in translation studies. Consequently, students may only identify lexical and structural differences without deeper engagement or qualitative evaluation. Moreover, the absence of guidebooks for instructors means that lessons are sometimes delivered without sufficient background knowledge of Qur'ānic and religious content.

The study's limitations include a small sample size—only five translated versions and nine Surahs—and a limited number of excerpts analyzed. These constraints can be addressed in future research. The findings may not be generalizable to other Surahs or to non-Arabic STs, highlighting the need for further studies involving a broader range of Qur'ānic chapters. Additionally, it remains challenging to find an English translation of the Holy Qur'ān that fully conveys the source language's messages due to prevalent errors in the translation process. Addressing these shortcomings requires continued efforts to develop new

theoretical and empirical frameworks aimed at producing a higher-quality English translation of the Holy Qur'ān.

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## A Comparative Analysis of Qur'ānic Allusions in Two English Translations of Hafiz's Poems

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### ABSTRACT

The present comparative-descriptive study aimed to investigate two English translations of Qur'ānic allusions in Hafiz's poems based on Leppihalme's (1997) model. To this end, 50 ghazals from *The Divan of Hafiz* and two corresponding English translations by Clarke (2005) and Salami (2016), were selected through random sampling. After data collection, comparisons were made and analyzed according to Leppihalme's (1997) translation procedures to identify which strategies were used more or less frequently by the two translators and to examine any differences between the translated and original texts, as well as between the translations themselves. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, along with inferential statistics such as the Chi-square test, were applied. The results of the descriptive analysis showed that the most frequently used strategies in both translations were Literal Translation, Replacement by Target-Language Equivalent, and Replacement by Source-Language Equivalent, respectively. The inferential analysis indicated that there was no significant difference in the translators' use of translation procedures based on Leppihalme's model when compared with the original text. Moreover, there were no notable differences between the two English translations of Qur'ānic allusions when compared with each other.

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## 1. Introduction

Given that the Holy Qur'ān, as a lofty and exalted source, has always exerted a profound influence on its audience, it has naturally attracted the attention of poets and writers seeking to enrich their works. In Persian literature in particular, authors have drawn upon Qur'ānic content and language in various forms, such as allusions, allegories, citations, and translations, both directly and indirectly. Abrams (1999) defines allusion as “a passing reference, without explicit identification, to a literary or historical person, place or event or to another literary work or passage” (p. 9). Similarly, Wheeler (1979) argues that allusion helps to clarify a text's meaning and reveals the literary modes and conventions within which its author operates. Indeed, allusion is a figure of speech that establishes a connection between elements in a text and references from history, mythology, literature, or religious scriptures. As such, it serves as a rich source of meaning and connotation, enhancing the semantic depth of a literary work.

Translating allusions can be particularly challenging, as their effectiveness relies on a specific level of cultural and literary awareness from the audience. Allusions presuppose a certain kind of participation on the part of the reader, who is expected to recognize and interpret the reference. Indeed, it can be argued that allusions play a significant role in persuading readers to accept the author's message, especially when they involve quotations from religious texts or renowned literary works. In this context, Arberry (1974) notes that Hafiz, the celebrated Persian poet, frequently employed refined literary devices such as allusion in his poetry. A review of existing studies reveals a notable scarcity of research focused on this subject, particularly within the Iranian academic context. Although comparative analyses of Hafiz's translations have garnered increased attention in recent years, relatively few studies have specifically addressed the role and translation of allusions.

As allusions play a crucial role in persuading readers to accept the author's message, especially when quoting religious texts or famous literary works, this study can be particularly significant and useful for certain groups, such as translators and language learners, for several reasons. The first and most important reason is that allusions enrich the texts in which they appear. As literary devices, they introduce layers of meaning, ambiguity, or exaggeration. Additionally, translators will become more aware of their responsibility to target text (TT) readers, as well as the strategies involved in translating literary texts and bridging the gap between literary and Qur'ānic contexts.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Allusion translation strategies

It is axiomatic that theorists have continuously been debating on the best strategies for rendering a translation. Considering this issue, a major problem is that without reference to the context in which translating takes place, the social circumstances of translation may be lost from sight. According to Hatim and Mason (1990), the beginning of a solution to the problem will depend on who does it for whom, and when, where, why and in what circumstances the translation takes place. In this regard, a competent and responsible translator, after spotting an allusion in a passage of the ST and after analyzing its function in the micro and macro contexts, must decide how to deal with it appropriately.

Leppihalme (1997) makes a distinction between proper-name allusions and key-phrase allusions. This is motivated by awareness that the two groups require slightly different lists of potential strategies (i.e., retention of the allusion, changing it somehow and omitting the allusion altogether). Differences arise from the fact that key-phrase allusions may only exceptionally be retained in their source-language forms, yet proper-name allusions are

indeed based on retention of the name, replacement of the name by another name and omission of the name. Each strategy may appear with some additional variants. According to Leppihalme (1997, pp. 78-9), a translator has three basic strategies when encountering an allusion. The translator may resort to the following techniques:

#### *Retain name*

- (1a) retain unchanged, or in conventional TL form;
- (1b) retain unchanged with added guidance;
- (1c) retain unchanged with detailed explanation.

#### *Replace name*

- (2a) replace with different SL name
- (2b) replace with different TL name

#### *Omit name*

- (3a) reduce to sense/meaning of the name
- (3b) omit name and allusion completely

According to Leppihalme (1997, pp. 78-79), translators can employ three primary strategies when handling proper-name allusions, each with specific techniques:

#### *Retain the Name*

- (1a) Retain unchanged or in conventional target-language (TL) form
  - Example: Joseph → جوزف
  - Note: Commonly used for names with established TL forms, such as monarchs, certain cities, books, or films.
- (1b) Retain unchanged with added guidance
  - Example: Toth → الهه خط
  - Provides minimal context to aid understanding.
- (1c) Retain unchanged with detailed explanation
  - Example: Israfil → اسرافيل (the angel who will blow the last trumpet twice: first, all living will die; second, all the dead will rise to be judged).
  - Uses footnotes or other explanatory methods.

#### *Replace the Name*

- (2a) Replace with a different source-language (SL) name
  - Example: Virgin → *مريم مقدس* (Saint Mary, using a general term instead of specific Catholic titles like "Gate of Heaven" or "Morning Star" to suit TL audience familiarity).
  - Adapts to a culturally relevant SL name.
- (2b) Replace with a target-language (TL) name
  - Example: Juliet and Romeo → *ليلی و مجنون*
  - Substitutes with a culturally equivalent TL name.

#### *Omit the Name*

- (3a) Reduce to sense/meaning of the name
  - Example: Jehosephat → *صحراى محشر* (referring to the valley where, according to Joel 3:2, God will gather nations for judgment).
  - Conveys the meaning through a descriptive term.
- (3b) Omit name and allusion completely
  - Removes the allusion entirely when it is not essential or translatable.

For key-phrase allusions, Leppihalme (1997) proposes a broader set of strategies to address cultural and contextual nuances:

- (A) Use a standard translation
  - Example: Refuge of Sinners → *حضرت مريم*; Apostles → *حواريون*
  - Relies on established translations for familiar phrases.
- (B) Minimum change (literal translation)
  - Similar to (A), maintaining close fidelity to the original phrasing.
- (C) Add extra-allusive guidance
  - Example: Use of typographical cues (e.g., inverted commas, italics) or introductory phrases like "...and according to the Bible..." to signal cultural allusions.
- (D) Provide footnotes, endnotes, forewords, or other external explanations
  - Adds detailed context outside the main text.
- (E) Simulated familiarity through internal marking

- Uses stylistic contrast or existing translations of
- (F) Replacement with a preformed TL item
  - Substitutes the source-language allusion with a culturally equivalent target-language (TL) phrase.
  - Example: The elixir of life/youth → آب حیات
  - Ensures the allusion resonates with the TL audience by using a familiar expression.
- (G) Reduction to sense
  - Conveys the connotation of the allusion using descriptive terms, omitting the specific alluding words.
  - Eucharistic hymn → سرود عبادتی (a worship hymn)
  - Unreasonable fault-finding → ایراد بنی اسرائیلی (baseless criticism)
- (H) Re-creation using varied techniques
  - Crafts a new expression to capture the meaning, tone, and cultural resonance of the original allusion, resembling the author's intent (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 122).
  - This strategy is complex and requires creative adaptation to evoke a similar effect in the TL.
  - Example: Adapting a unique literary allusion to a TL equivalent that mirrors its emotional or cultural impact.
- (L) Omission
  - Removes the allusion entirely when it cannot be effectively translated or is deemed non-essential.
  - Used as a last resort to avoid confusion or irrelevance in the TL context.

In addition to the above nine strategies, Leppihalme suggests that it is possible that the allusion is left untranslated, that is, it appears in the target text in its source-text form. The use of a standard translation is obviously a choice only if one exists, and it may occasionally be identical with the minimum change translation. Re-creation is a demanding strategy, so it is not very likely to come up in my analyses. The potential strategies are organized on the basis of Levy's notion of minimax strategy': a useful tool for translators pressed for time, as they can put in a minimum of effort to achieve the maximum effect (in Leppihalme 1997, p. 26). Omission is placed last in the list for two reasons: firstly, it may be effortless, but it does not result in a maximum of effect (p. 130), and secondly, she perceives omission, on the basis of the norms discernible from her translator interviews, as the last resort; permissible only when everything else fails (p. 88).

## 2.2. Empirical studies

Pirnajmuddin and Niknasab (2011) investigated the strategies employed in translating allusions, both proper-name and key-phrase allusions, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, as rendered by Badi'ei (1380), Dariush (1370), and Jooya (1382). Following the approach of Vahid Dastjerdi and Sahebbonar (2008), they utilized Leppihalme's (1997) taxonomy of translation strategies. Their findings revealed that the most frequently used strategy was the retention of the original name, while omission was the least common.

Bahrami (2012) focused on the translation of allusions in the poetry of Hafiz, specifically examining the strategies (based on Leppihalme, 1997) employed by Clark (1891) in translating proper-name and key-phrase allusions. She found that the most commonly used strategy for proper-name allusions was unmodified retention, while literal translation with minimal change was most frequently applied to key-phrase allusions. Bahrami argued that the translator's tendency toward literal translation may reflect an intent to remain faithful to the source text, although this approach can result in the loss of cultural connotations.

Khadem and Dastjerdi (2012) analyzed the translation of key-phrase allusions in the poem *The Wolf and the Fox Go to the Hunt in Attendance on the Lion*, from Book One of the *Mathnawi*. They compared the original Persian poem with its English translations using Leppihalme's (1997) framework to identify the strategies employed by translators and the rationale behind them. Their analysis revealed that the most commonly used strategy was the addition of extra-allusive material and footnotes, often including italicization and explanatory notes. This was likely due to the fact that many key-phrase allusions in the *Mathnawi* are Qur'anic verses.

In the field of comparative literary studies, which seeks to identify similarities and differences in poetic works from diverse cultural backgrounds, Saleem (2015) examined the use of allusions in the poetry of John Milton—particularly *Paradise Lost*—and Persian poet Hafiz Shirazi. He emphasized that readers unfamiliar with a given culture may struggle to understand allusions, leading to challenges in interpretation. Saleem concluded that poetry acts as a "wine of minds," offering a parallel and more enchanting world. With the rise of comparative literature and digital globalization, poetry has transcended geographic boundaries, attracting global readership and analysis through diverse critical frameworks.

Salo-oja (2004) explored the translation of thematic and character-related allusions in two of Reginald Hill's detective novels—*The Wood Beyond* and *On Beulah Height*—and their Swedish translations, *Det mörka arvet* and *Dalen som dränktes*. Her close textual analysis showed minor differences between the source and target texts. While some changes appeared inevitable, she argued that divergent views on crime fiction in British and Swedish contexts likely influenced how certain narrative elements were emphasized in translation and, consequently, how the Swedish audience received them.

Mohaghegh (2013) adopted Reiss's (1971) text-based model of translation criticism to analyze Clark's (1891) English translation of Hafiz's Ghazal 167. Her linguistic analysis revealed several mistranslations stemming from literal rendering and misinterpretation of idiomatic expressions, which resulted in unintelligible or inaccurate translations.

Rahimkhani and Salmani (2013) addressed the treatment of Qur'anic allusions in the English translations of Hafiz's *Divan*. They analyzed selected instances using Venuti's (1995) concepts of domestication and foreignization alongside Leppihalme's (1997)

strategies. Their findings showed that Ordoubadian (2006) generally favored domesticating the source material, while Clark (2005) aimed to preserve the original's cultural specificity. As a result, the allusive language and underlying connotations were often overlooked or inadequately conveyed.

Niknasab (2014) conducted a study titled *Translation and Culture: Allusions as Culture Bumps*, concluding that allusions are inherently culture-bound, and their intelligibility across languages varies significantly. The translation strategies chosen play a critical role in how allusions are understood and appreciated in the target culture. She emphasized that novice translators may fail to preserve the connotations of allusions if they do not recognize their cultural significance.

A review of the literature reveals that while many studies have focused on comparative analyses of Hafiz's *Ghazals* and their English translations, relatively few have examined Qur'ānic allusions within these poems. Given that literary texts—and particularly the Qur'ān—are rich in culture-specific references, this area warrants deeper investigation. Therefore, the present study aims to compare the translation of Qur'ānic allusions in Hafiz's poetry in two English translations: one by Clark (2005) and another by Salami (2016), using Leppihalme's (1997) model. Specifically, the study compares selected *Ghazals* from Hafiz's corpus and their English counterparts to identify the strategies each translator employed, leading to the following research questions:

- ✓ What are the most/least frequently used procedures used in the translation of Qur'ānic allusions considering Leppihalme's (1997) model?
- ✓ Is there any significant difference between the original Qur'ānic allusions and each English translation?
- ✓ Is there any significant difference between the two translations of Qur'ānic allusions?

### 3. Methodology

The present research is a corpus-based descriptive - analytic comparative study involving the original Persian version of Hafiz poems and its two English translations. The content of the original and the two English translations were analyzed and compared based on the poetic elements presented in Leppihalme's (1997) model by applying Chi-square procedure.

#### 3.1. Materials

For the purpose of this study, fifty Ghazals of Hafiz were selected based on random sampling from three materials including "*The Divan of Hafiz*", written by Hafiz (14<sup>th</sup> century) in Persian and its two English translations by Clarke (2005) and Salami (2016).

"*The Divan of Hafiz*" is written by Khwāja Shams-ud-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfeẓ-e Shīrāzī known by his pen name Hafiz (14th-century).

It is translated by Henry Wilberforce Clark (2005) as one of the best English translations of this divan and published by Honar e Bistom publication. It is also translated by Ismail Salami (2016) and published by Avardgah Honar va Andisheh publication, which is a combination of collections and translation.

### *3.2. Framework of the study*

Leppihalme's model (1997) was selected as the most relevant framework for this study. It distinguishes between proper-name allusions and key-phrase allusions, with distinct translation strategies for each category. The strategies for translating proper-name allusions aim to:

- Retain the name unaltered
- Change the name
- Omit the name

These strategies are further divided into the following subcategories:

#### *A. Retention of Name*

- (a) Use the name as is
- (b) Use the name with added guidance
- (c) Use the name with a detailed explanation (e.g., via a footnote)

#### *B. Replacement of Name*

- (a) Replace with another SL name
- (b) Replace with a TL name

#### *C. Omission of Name*

- (a) Omit the name but convey the sense through other means (e.g., using a common noun)
- (b) Omit both the name and the allusion entirely

The strategies for translating key-phrase allusions differ from those for proper names, though the general approach is similar. According to Leppihalme (1997), a retentive strategy for key-phrase allusions involves either a standard translation or minimal changes. The potential strategies for key-phrase allusions include:

- Retention
- Literal translation
- Replacement by target-language equivalent
- Omission
- Rephrasing
- Use of common words

- Retention with added guidance
- Replacement by source-language equivalent

### 3.3. Data collection procedure

This study aimed to evaluate the quality of translation of Qur'ānic allusions in Hafiz's work. Fifty ghazals from Hafiz's *Divan* (source text, ST) were randomly selected as the study's corpus. The corresponding English translations (target texts, TT) from two versions were identified. Each ST-TT pair was analyzed sentence by sentence to detect and categorize translation strategies. For data analysis, the translations of Qur'ānic allusions were classified into eight categories based on Leppihalme's (1997) model:

1. Retention
2. Literal translation
3. Replacement with target-language equivalent
4. Omission
5. Rephrasing
6. Use of common words
7. Retention with added guidance
8. Replacement with source-language equivalent

For instance, in the following verse both Clarke (2005) and Salami (2016) translated the word *کوثر* and *حور* as **Kausar** and **Huris**. Based on Leppihalme's (1997) model they are categorized as Literal Translation.

فردا شراب کوثر و حور از برای ماست

وامروز نیز ساقی مهروی و جام می (ص ۳۹۴)

In another example, while Clarke (2005) and Salami (2016) translated the word *سامری* as **Sameri**, which is categorized as literal translation, Clarke (2005) also adds the word **Moses** in his work in order to convey the exact meaning, which is not observed in Salami's (2016) translation.

آن همه شعبده ها عقل که می کرد آنجا

سامری پیش عصا و یَد بیضا می کرد (ص ۱۳۲).

### 3.4. Data analysis procedure

In order to carry out this study, both quantitative and qualitative content analysis were employed to investigate and evaluate the extent to which English translators applied



different translation strategies in the light of Leppihalme's (1997) model in translating Qur'ānic allusions. In this regard, descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation as well as the frequency and percentage were applied to describe the collected data and to determine the most frequent strategies used by English translators. Inferential statistics including Chi-Square test was run to find out whether Clarke's (2005) and Salami's (2016) translation procedures differed from each other significantly or not. In order to check the inter-coder validity of the data extracted, an expert in Applied Linguistics was requested to comment on the initial content analysis as well. The results were presented via tables and figures. The statistical procedures were done through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Clarke's (2005) translation

In the following, some examples of Hafiz poems, their translation as well as related Qur'ānic allusions and their Persian translation together with the translation procedures used by Clark (2005) are as presented.

Example #1:

ST:

که ای صوفی شراب آنکه شود صاف که در شیشه بماند اربعینی

TT: Oh Sufi! Pure, becometh wine at that time: when, in bottle, it bringth forth a forty days' space.

Allusion in the Qur'ān (Surah Al-A'raf:142)

وَإِعْدْنَا مُوسَى ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرِ قَتَمٍ مِيقَاتٍ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

PT:

و با موسی برای عبادت ویژه و دریافت تورات سی شب وعده گذاشتیم و آن را با افزودن ده شب کامل کردیم پس میعادگاه پروردگارش به چهل شب پایان گرفت و موسی هنگامی که به میعادگاه می رفت به برادرش هارون گفت در میان قومم جانشین من باش و به اصلاح بر خیز و از راه و روش مفسدان پیروی مکن.

Here, the translator used the strategy of retention by guidance

Example #2

ST:

یارب این آتش که در جان منست سرد کن زان سان که کردی بر خلیل

TT:

O Lord! This fire (of separation) that within my soul is, make cool (to give me escape from separation; and to cause to attain union with Thee) in that way that to Khalil Thou didst.

Allusion in the Qur'ān (Surah Al-Anbya: 68-69):

فُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَيَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

PT:

(آنان) خواستند ابراهیم را به آتش افکنند، ولی ما گفتیم: «ای آتش! بر ابراهیم سرد و سالم باش!»

Here, the translator used the strategy of literal translation.

Example #3

ST:

لَمَعَ الْبَرْقُ مِنَ الطُّورِ وَآنَسْتُ بِهِ فَلَغَلِي لَكَ آتٍ بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ

TT:

From the direction of Tur, lightening flashed; to it, I inclined: perchance, thee, a brand of bright flame, I may bring.

Allusion in the Qur'ān (Surah Al-Qasas: 29):

فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِأَهْلِهِ آنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ جُدُودٍ  
مِّنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ

PT:

وقتی موسی مدت مأموریت خود را به پایان رساند و با خانواده‌اش حرکت کرد، از سمت طور آتشی دید. به خانواده‌اش گفت: «درنگ کنید، من آتشی دیده‌ام، شاید خبری برای شما بیاورم یا شعله‌ای از آتش تا با آن گرم شوید».

Here, the translator used the strategy of retention.

Example #4

ST:

آسمان بار امانت نتوانست کشید قرعه‌ی فال به نام من دیوانه زدند

TT:

The lode of deposit, the sky could not endure: in the name of helpless me, the dice of the work, they cast.

Allusion in the Qur'ān (Surah Al-Ahzab: 72):

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

PT:

ما امانت (تعهد، تکلیف، و ولایت الهیة) را بر آسمانها و زمین و کوهها عرضه داشتیم، آنها از حمل آن سر باز زدند و از آن هراسیدند، اما انسان آن را بر دوش کشید. به راستی او بسیار ستمگر و نادان بود.

Here, the translator used the strategy of rephrase.

Example #5

ST:

ز آتش وادی ایمن نه منم خرم و بس موسی اینجا به امید قبسی می آید.

TT:

From Wadi Ayman's fire, cheerful, not only am I: there, Moses in hope of a fire comes.

Allusion in the Qur'an (Surah Taha: 10):

إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا أَلْعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجْدٍ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى

PT:

هنگامی که آتشی را دید، به خانواده‌اش گفت: «درنگ کنید! من آتشی دیده‌ام، شاید شعله‌ای از آن برای شما بیاورم، یا در کنار آتش راهنمایی یابم.»

Here, the translator used the strategy of common words.

Overall, in Clarke's (2005) translation, literal translation was the most frequent strategy (6 instances, 27%), followed by replacement by target equivalent, rephrase, and replacement by SL equivalent (each 4 instances, 18%). Retention occurred twice (9%), while common words and retention by guidance each appeared once (5%). No instances of omission were used. For similarities and differences, literal translation, common words, and retention by guidance showed 100% similarity. retention and replacement by source language equivalent had equal similarity and difference (50% each). Replacement by target equivalent had 75% similarity and 25% difference, while rephrase showed 67% similarity and 33% difference. no omission was observed. Chi-square procedure was run to show if there are statistically significant differences between similarities and differences between Hafiz and Clarke (2005) in terms of translation procedures. Since the similarity of literal translation, common words and retention by guidance are estimated as 100%, chi-square was not calculated. as indicated, the percentages of similarities and differences in Retention and Replacement by SL Equivalent are equal; therefore, there was no need to calculate Chi-square. The chi-square test results for Clarke's (2005) translation procedures show that replacement by target equivalent had a chi-square value of 1.429 (df = 1, p = .232), indicating no statistically significant difference. In contrast, rephrase had a chi-square value of 2.857 (df = 1, p < .001), suggesting a statistically significant difference. Therefore, it can be concluded that the

differences between similarities and differences for rephrase procedure is statistically significant.

#### 4.2. Salami's (2016) translation

Some examples of Hafiz poems, their translation as well as related Qur'ānic allusions and their Persian translation together with the translation procedures used by Salami (2016) are as presented below.

##### Example #1

ST:

این همه شعبده ی خویش که می کرد اینجا سامری پیش عصا و ید بیضا می کرد

TT:

The tricks that we ourselves behold, by juggling Reason planned: were played by Samiri, who opposed the Staff and the White Hand.

Allusion in the Qur'ān (Surah Al-A'raf: 107):

فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ

PT:

عصای خود را افکند ناگهان ازدهایی آشکاری شد

Here, the translator used the strategy of omission.

##### Example #2

ST:

یوسف گمگشته بازآید به کنعان غم مخور  
کلبه احزان شود روزی گلستان غم مخور

TT:

Do not grieve: Joseph, lost, returns to Canaan; the hut of sorrow turns to a rose garden, do not grieve.

Allusion in the Qur'ān (Surah Yusuf: 99):

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ آوَى إِلَيْهِ أَبْوِيَّهُ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِينَ

PT:

و هنگامی که بر یوسف وارد شدند ، او پدر و مادر خود را در آغوش گرفت ، و گفت: «همگی داخل مصر شوید ، که انشاء الله در امن و امان خواهید بود!

Here, the translator used the strategy of literal translation.

### Example #3

ST:

یار مفروش به دنیا که بسی سود نکرد  
آنکه یوسف به زر ناسره بفروخته بود

TT:

Sell not the Beloved for the world, for it profited not: the one who sold Joseph for base gold.

Allusion in the Qur'an (Surah Yusuf: 20):

وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ

PT:

و فروختند او را به بهای اندک به چند درهم شمرده شده و بودند در آن از بی رغبتان

Here, the translator used the strategy of rephrasing.

### Example #4

ST:

بیدلی در همه احوال خدا با او بود  
او نمی دیدش و از دور خدایا می کرد

TT:

In every state, God was with the heart-lost one, most dear: yet he saw Him not and called to God as if far away.

Allusion in the Qur'an (Surah Qaf: 16):

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعَّمًا مَّا تُوَسَّوُسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ ۖ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنَّا حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

PT:

ما انسان را آفریدیم و وسوسه های نفس او را می دانیم ، و ما به او از رگ قلبش نزدیکتریم

Here, the translator used the strategy of replacement by target equivalent.

### Example #5

ST:

چو هست آب حیاتت به دست تشنه ممیر

فلا تمت و من الماء كل شيء حي

**TT:**

When the water of life is in your hand, let not the thirsty die: “Die not, for from water everything is living.”

**Allusion in the Qur’ān (Surah Al-Anbya: 30):**

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

**PT:**

آیا کسانی که کفر ورزیدند ندانستند که آسمانها و زمین هر دو به هم پیوسته بودند و ما آن دو را از هم جدا ساختیم و هر چیز زنده ای را از آب پدید آوردیم آیا [باز هم] ایمان نمی آورند.

Here, the translator used the strategy of retention.

Overall, in Salami’s (2005) translation, literal translation was the most frequent strategy (6 instances, 26%), followed by replacement by target equivalent and replacement by source language equivalent (each 4 instances, 18%). Rephrase had 3 instances (14%), retention had 2 instances (9%), and omission, common words, and retention by guidance each had 1 instance (5%). For similarities and differences, retention, omission, common words, and retention by guidance showed 100% similarity. Literal translation and rephrase had 67% similarity and 33% difference, while replacement by source language equivalent had 75% similarity and 25% difference. Conversely, replacement by target equivalent showed 25% similarity and 75% difference. Overall, similarities between source and target texts were more frequent than differences. The chi-square test for translation procedures used by Salami (2016) compared to Hafiz shows significant differences across all tested strategies. Literal translation had a chi-square value of 1.352 (df = 1, p < .001), replacement by Target Equivalent 1.229 (df = 1, p < .001), rephrase 1.629 (df = 1, p < .001), and replacement by source language equivalent 1.657 (df = 1, p < .001). With a significance level of .000 for all procedures, the results indicate that similarities between the source and target texts are dominant over differences.

Given the third research question, inferential statistics was applied to identify whether two English translations of Hafiz poets are similar or not. The inferential statistics applied to compare the English translations of Hafiz’s Qur’ānic allusions by Clarke (2005) and Salami (2016) show a high degree of similarity. It appears that 19 instances (86%) were similar, while only 3 instances (14%) were different, out of a total of 22. The chi-square test yielded a value of 1.645 (df = 1, p = .020), confirming a statistically significant difference between similarities and differences. This suggests that the translation procedures used by Clarke and Salami, based on Leppihalme’s (1997) model, are predominantly similar, with similarities far outweighing differences.

## 5. Discussion

The present study aimed to do a comparative analysis of two translations of Qur'ānic allusions in Hafiz poems based on Leppihalme's (1997) model. Accordingly, it was attempted to find out which procedures were used more and less by the two translators and whether there were any differences between the translated texts and the original text as well as the translated texts themselves. In order to answer the first research question, the descriptive statistics was applied to determine the frequency and percentage of different translation strategies for Qur'ānic allusions. Thus, it was revealed that the frequency and percentage of literal translation in Clarke's (2005) work was more than other strategies. After that, replacement by target equivalent, rephrase and replacement by SL equivalent had the highest frequency and percentage. Finally, retention, common words, and retention by guidance had somehow the same frequency and percentage.

In Clarke's (2005) translation, Literal Translation was the most used strategy (27%), followed by replacement by target equivalent, replacement by source language equivalent, and rephrase (each 18%). Retention (9%), common words (5%), and retention by guidance (5%) were less frequent, with no instances of omission. In Salami's (2016) translation, literal translation was also the most frequent (26%), followed by replacement by target equivalent and replacement by source language equivalent (each 18%). retention was used in 9% of cases, while omission, common words, and retention by guidance were the least frequent (each 5%). As a whole, literal translation was the most frequently used procedure, while omission was the least used in both English translations by Salami (2016) and Clarke (2005). Other common methods included Replacement by Target Equivalent, Replacement by SL Equivalent, and Rephrase. According to Leppihalme's (1997) model, both translations showed similar use of translation procedures.

Given the second research question, the similarities between the original text book and its translation were more than the differences. In this vein, the results of the Chi-square test revealed the significant difference between similarities and differences, showing that the similarities were dominant which indicated that there was no significant difference between the two English translations in comparing with the original Persian version.

Given the third research question, the percentage of similarities, in translation procedures for illusions used by these two English translators were more than differences. The results of the Chi-square test indicated that the differences between similarities and differences of two English translations of Hafiz's book were statistically significant. In this vein, the procedures selected by two TTs were similar since the level of similarities was far higher than the level of differences. Therefore, there was no significant difference between two English translations of Qur'ānic allusions based on Leppihalme's (1997) model in comparing with each other.

This study's findings align with Bahrami (2012), who found that in translating Hafiz's poems, the most common strategies were retention for Proper-Name allusions and literal translation for key-phrase allusions. Similarly, Rahimkhani and Salmani (2013) noted that Ordoubadian (2006) tended to domesticate Qur'ānic allusions, while Clarke (2005) preserved their cultural distinctiveness, often ignoring the original's connotations. Mohaghegh (2013) found that Clarke's (1891) literal translations led to misinterpretations and unintelligible idioms. However, these findings contrast with Khadem and Dastjerdi (2012), who found that the most common strategy for translating key-phrase allusions in Mathnawi was the use of extra-allusive explanations and footnotes.

## 6. Conclusion

It can be argued that translation is, for the most part, an invisible process, and thus it seems necessary for an acceptable translation to produce the same (or at least similar) effects on the TT readers as those created by the original work on its readers. Moreover, awareness of translation strategies models is necessary for the translators in their translation practice, so that an open discussion about translation can help translators by increasing consciousness of the task and may be helpful to the students of translation who try to work on translation studies. In the meantime, the translators, most often, do not appear to be successful in their challenging tasks of efficiently rendering the allusions when they sacrifice, or at least minimize, the effect of allusions in favor of preserving graphical or lexical forms of source language allusions. In other words, a competent translator is well-advised not to deprive the TL reader of enjoying, or even recognizing, the allusions either in the name of fidelity or brevity. Hence, the translator carefully searches for strategies to cope with these problems. Consequently, the translator's choice of strategy for the translation of allusive elements may subtly result in preventing the TT readers from spotting and enjoying allusions and in failure to transfer the connotation the original author intended to evoke in his/her readers. Personal and comparative descriptive studies can also offer a new point of view by sharing an experience with others as they may help others who try to do comparative study of literary texts.

Considering the above points, this study may be valuable to translators, translation instructors, critics, and educators. In terms of implications, novice translators will recognize that translating a text without a proper understanding of its allusions can result in the loss of meaning for most target-text readers. At the same time, experienced translation teachers and professional translators are expected to deepen their awareness of allusions and the challenges they pose in translation. This study may also contribute to the field of literary studies. One potential criterion for evaluating the quality of translated poetry could be the range and effectiveness of translation strategies employed. Research such as the present study can offer practical solutions by analyzing and assessing the strategies used for translating allusions into English.

This study has several limitations, including its restriction to only 50 randomly selected ghazals due to time constraints, which may affect generalizability. Locating complete English translations of Hafiz's work was also challenging, as many versions are abridged. Future research could expand to the entire Divan and explore Hafiz's theological, mystical, and social allusions, the ethical aspects of his romantic philosophy (rindi), his influence on Western poetry, and the cultural implications of different translation strategies.

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## Appendix A:

Translation procedures used by Clark (2005) (ST= Source Text, QA= Qur'ānic Allusion, PT= Persian Translation, TT= Target Translation)

Retention by Guidance	که ای صوفی شراب آنکه شود صاف که در شیشه بماند اربعینی (ص. ۴۸۳)	ST
	وَاعْدُنَا مُوسَى ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرِ فَنَمَّ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (اعراف ۱۴۲)	QA
	و با موسی برای عبادت ویژه و دریافت تورات سی شب وعده گذاشتیم و آن را با افزودن ده شب کامل کردیم پس میعادگاه پروردگارش به چهل شب پایان گرفت و موسی هنگامی که به میعادگاه می رفت به برادرش هارون گفت در میان قومم جانشین من باش و به اصلاح بر خیز و از راه و روش مفسدان پیروی مکن.	PT
	Oh Sufi! Pure, becometh wine at that time: when, in bottle, it bringth forth a forty days' space.	TT
Literal Translation	یارب این آتش که در جان منست سرد کن زان سان که کردی بر خلیل (ص. ۲۰۵)	ST
	قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ (انبیا ۶۸)	QA
	سرانجام او را به آتش افکندند ولی ما گفتیم: «ای آتش! بر ابراهیم سرد و سالم باش!»	PT
	O Lord! This fire (of separation) that within my soul is, make cool (to give me escape from separation; and to cause to attain union with Thee) in that way that to Khalil Thou didst.	TT
	فیض روح القدس از باز مدد فرماید دیگران هم بکنند آنچه مسیحا می کرد (ص. ۱۷۳)	ST
	وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيْتَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَصَلُّوا كَذِبًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَقَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَئِنْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا لَأَسْأَلَنَّكُمْ أَمْ أَلَسْتُمْ بِأَعْيُنِكُمْ قَوَامًا وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ لَوِ كُنْتُمْ شَاكِرِينَ (مائدة ۱۰۹)	QI
	ما به موسی کتاب (تورات) دادیم و بعد از او، پیامبرانی پشت سر هم فرستادیم و به عیسی بن مریم دلایل روشن دادیم و او را به وسیله روح القدس تأیید کردیم. آیا چنین نیست که هر زمان، پیامبری، چیزی بر خلاف هوای نفس شما آورد، در برابر او تکبر کردید (و از ایمان آوردن به او خودداری نمودید) پس عده ای را تکذیب کرده، و جمعی را به قتل رساندید؟	PT
	Anyone who is touched by God's grace can do what Christ, without fail	TT
	بیا ساقی بده رطل گرانم سقاک الله من کاس دهاق (ص. ۴۲۸)	ST
	إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا (نبا ۳۱) حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا (نبا ۳۲) وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا (نبا ۳۳) وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا (نبا ۳۴)	QI
همانا برای اهل پروا، رستگاری و کامیابی بزرگی است. انواع باغها و انگورها. و همسرانی زیبا و دلربا، همانند و هم سال و جام‌هایی سرشار (نبا ۳۱/۳۴)	PT	
Saki! Come: me, the heavy ritl give: God give thee to drink from a full cup.	TT	
شب قدر است و طی شد نامه ی هجر سلام فيه حتی مطلع الفجر(ص. ۲۵۱)	ST	

	«سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ» (قدر ۵)	Q I
	و سلامتی در آن شب است تا طلوع صبح (قدر ۵)	PT
	Tis the night of power; and closed is the book of separation: on the other night, is safety to the rising of separation.	TT
	فردا شراب کوثر و حور از برای ماست و امروز نیز ساقی مهروی و جام می (ص. ۳۹۴)	ST
	وَ جَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَ حَرِيرًا (انسان ۱۲) عَلَيْهِمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٍ خُضْرٌ وَ اِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَ حُلُوًّا اَسْوَارٌ مِنْ فَضَّةٍ وَ سِقَاهُمْ زُبُرًا شَرَابًا طَهُورًا (انسان ۲۱)	Q I
	و بهشت و پریشان را به پاداش این که بر اطاعت خدا و در برابر گزندها و مصیبت ها شکیبایی ورزیدند پاداششان دهد. (انسان ۱۲) بر بالای بهشتیان، لطیف دیبای سبز و حریر ستبر است و بر دستهایشان دستبند نقره خام ، و خدایشان شرابی پاک ( و گوارا از کوثر عنایت ) بنوشاند. (انسان ۲۱)	PT
	To-morrow the wine of Kausar, and huris are mine And today there is also a beautiful tapster and a cup of wine.	TT
	یوسف گمگشته باز آید به کنعان غم مخور کلبه ی احزان شود روزی گلستان غم مخور (ص. ۲۶۰)	ST
	فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيَّ يَوْسُفُ اَوْيَ اِلَيْهِ اَبُوهُ وَ قَالَ اَدْخُلُوا مِصْرَ اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ اٰمِنِينَ (يوسف ۹۹)	Q I
	و هنگامی که بر یوسف وارد شدند ، او پدر و مادر خود را در آغوش گرفت ، و گفت: «همگی داخل مصر شوید ، که انشاء الله در امن و امان خواهید بود!»	PT
	Back to Kinan, lost Yusuf cometh: suffer not grief: One day, the sorrowful cell becometh the rose-garden: suffer not grief.	TT
Retention	لَمَعَ الْبَرْقُ مِنَ الطُّورِ وَ اَنْسَتْ بِهٖ فَعَلِيَ لَكَ اَنْتِ بِشَاهِبِ قَبَسٍ (ص. ۴۲۵)	ST
	فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَىٰ الْاَجَلَ وَ سَارَ بِاَهْلِيهِ اَنْسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا قَالَ لِاٰهْلِيهِ اَمْكُثُوا اِنِّي اَنْتَسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ اَوْ جَذْوَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ (قصص ۲۹)	QA
	هنگامی که موسی مدت خود را به پایان رسانید و همراه خانواده اش ( از مدین به سوی مصر ) حرکت کرد ، از جانب طور آتشی دید! به خانواده اش گفت: «درنگ کنید که من آتشی دیدم! ( می روم ) شاید خبری از آن برای شما بیاورم ، یا شعله ای از آتش تا با آن گرم شوید!»	PT
	From the direction of Tur, lightening flashed; to it, I inclined: perchance, thee, a brand of bright flame, I may bring.	TT
	چو هست آب حیات به دست تشنه ممیر فلا تمت و من الماء كل شيء حي (ص. ۴۳۰)	ST
	اَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْاَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ اَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (انبیاء ۳۰) الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحْبِبُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَيَّ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَ يَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ وَ يَتَّبِعُونَ اَوْلِيَاءَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ (ابراهيم ۳)	Q I
آیا کسانی که کفر ورزیدند ندانستند که آسمانها و زمین هر دو به هم پیوسته بودند و ما آن دو را از هم جدا ساختیم و هر چیز زنده ای را از آب پدید آوردیم آیا [باز هم] ایمان نمی آورند (انبیاء ۳۰)	PT	

	همانها که زندگی دنیا را بر آخرت ترجیح می دهند و ( مردم را ) از راه خدا باز می دارند و می خواهند راه حق را منحرف سازند آنها در گمراهی دوری هستند! ( ابراهیم ۳)	
	When in thy hand, is the water of life, thirsty die not: di not; living is everything from water.	TT
Rephrase	آسمان بار امانت نتوانست کشید قرعه ی فال به نام من دیوانه زدند (ص. ۱۷۵)	ST
	إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا (احزاب ۲۷)	QA
	ما امانت ( تعهد ، تکلیف ، و ولایت الهیه ) را بر آسمانها و زمین و کوه ها عرضه داشتیم ، آنها از حمل آن سر برتافتند ، و از آن هراسیدند اما انسان آن را بر دوش کشید او بسیار ظالم و جاهل بود ، ( چون قدر این مقام عظیم را نشناخت و به خود ستم کرد !)	PT
	The lode of deposit, the sky could not endure: in the name of helpless me, the dice of the work, they cast.	TT
	نیست در دایره یک نقطه خلاف از کم و بیش که من این مسئله بی چون و چرا می بینم (ص. ۳۴۰)	ST
	الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَاوُتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ (المالك ۴)	QI
	همان که هفت آسمان را طبقه طبقه بیافرید در آفرینش آن [خدای] بخشایشگر هیچ گونه اختلاف [و تفاوتی] نمی بینی بازنگر آیا خلل [و نقصانی] می بینی.	PT
	There is not any deviation in a circle even a point: tis as a matter of course, I see.	TT
	اینکه پیرانه سرم صحبت یوسف بنواختاجر صبریست که در کلبه ی احزان کردم (ص. ۲۹۲)	ST
	وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ (بقره ۴۵)	QI
	از صبر و نماز یاری جوید ( و با استقامت و مهار هوسهای درونی و توجه به پروردگار ، نیرو بگیرید ) و این کار ، جز برای خاشعان ، گران است.	PT
	If Joseph brings up me is old I flourish: tis for my patience in my call of sorrow.	TT
	یار مفروش به دنیا که بسی سود نکرد آنکه یوسف به زر ناسره بفروخته بود (ص. ۱۹۹)	ST
	وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ (یوسف ۲۱)	QI
و فروختند او را به بهای اندک به چند درهم شمرده شده و بودند در آن از بی رغبتان.	PT	
The Beloved, sell not for the world. For, much, it profited not: that one who, for bse gold, Yusuf, had sold.	TT	
Common Words	ز آتش وادی ایمن نه منم خُرّم و بس موسی اینجا به امید قبسی می آید (ص. ۲۲۸)	ST
	إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا. لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجْدٍ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى (طه ۱۰)	QA
	هنگامی که آتشی را دید، پس به خانواده ی خود گفت: قدری درنگ کنید، همانا من آتشی یافتم، شاید (بتوانم) مقداری از آن را برای شما بیاورم یا به واسطه ی (آن) آتش، راهی بیایم. (طه ۱۰)	PT

	From Wadi Aymans fire, cheerful, not only am I: there, Moses in hope of a fire comes.	TT
Replacement by Target Equivalent	چشم حافظ زیر بام قصر آن حوری سرشت شیوه ی جنات تجری تحتها الانهار داشت (ص. ۷۷)	ST
	إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ (بروج ۱۲)	QA
	وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا (نساء ۶۰)	
	همانا برای کسانی که اهل ایمان و عمل صالح هستند، باغ‌هایی بهشتی است که نهرها از زیر آن جاری است، این است رستگاری بزرگ. ( بروج ۱۲)	
	و کسانی که ایمان آورده اند و اعمال صالح انجام داده اند ، بزودی آن را در باغهایی از بهشت وارد می کنیم که نهرها از زیر درختانش جاری است جاودانه در آن خواهند ماند. وعده حق خداوند است و کیست که در گفتار و وعده هایش ، از خدا صادقتر باشد؟! (نساء ۶۰)	PT
	Below the roof of the palace of the beloved of Hun-nature, the eye Hafiz: the way of paradise, beneath which streams are flowing, held.	TT
	تکیه بر تقوی و دانش در طریقت کافری است راهرو گر صد هنر دارد توکل بایدش (ص. ۲۷۶)	ST
	وَ يَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَّوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا (طلاق ۳) قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَ نُسُكِي وَ مَحْيَايَ وَ مَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (انعام ۱۶۲)	QI
	و از جایی که تصور نمی کند ، به او روزی می رساند و نیازهای زندگی اش را برطرف می سازد . و هر کس بر خدا توکل کند ، خدا برای تأمین سعادت او بس است؛ چرا که خدا کار خود را به انجام می رساند . و خدا برای هر چیزی اندازه ای قرار داده است. (طلاق ۳) بگو: «نماز و تمام عبادات من ، و زندگی و مرگ من ، همه برای خداوند پروردگار جهانیان است. (انعام ۱۶۲)	PT
	In tarikat, reliance on piety and knowledge is infidelity: if a hundred kinds of skill, the way-farer have, trust in God is necessary for him.	TT
حضور خلوت انس است و دوستان جمع اند و ان یکاد بخوانید و در فراز کنید (ص. ۲۸۶)	ST	
وَ إِنَّ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُرْلَفُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ (قلم ۵۲)	QI	
و نزدیک بود آنانکه کافر شدند بزند تو را با چشمهایشان چون شنیدند قرآن را و می گویند اینکه او دیوانه است (قلم ۵۲)	PT	
Tis the correct of the assembly of friendship; and collected are friends: and to! Those who disbelieve..read ye; wide the door make ye.	TT	
بیدلی در همه احوال خدا با او بودا و نمی دیدش و از دور خدایا می کرد (ص. ۱۳۲)	ST	

	و لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَ نَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَ نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ (ق ١٦)	Q I
	ما انسان را آفریدیم و وسوسه های نفس او را می دانیم ، و ما به او از رگ قلبش نزدیکتریم!	PT
	Unknowingly, He was with me everywhere: I couldn't see and my soul sleekest Him, made.	TT
	در پس آینه طوطی صفتم داشته اند آنچه استاد ازل گفت بگو می گویم (ص. ١٧٣)	ST
	قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَ لَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنِّي أَنبِئُكُمْ إِلَّا مَا يُوْحِي إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَ الْبَصِيرُ أَ فَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ (انعام ٥١)	QA
	بگو: «من نمی گویم خزاین خدا نزد من است و من ، ( جز آنچه خدا به من بیاموزد ، ) از غیب آگاه نیستم! و به شما نمی گویم من فرشته ام تنها از آنچه به من وحی می شود پیروی می کنم.» بگو: «آیا نابینا و بینا مساویند؟! پس چرا نمی اندیشید؟!»	PT
	Behind the mirror me, they kept like the parrot: what the teacher of eternity without beginning said: Say; I say.	TT
	ظلّ ممدود خم زلف توام بر سر باد کاندرین سایه قرار دل شیدا باشد (ص. ١٥٧)	ST
	وَ أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ (واقعه ٢٧) فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ (واقعه ٢٨) وَ طَلْحٍ مَّنْضُودٍ (واقعه ٢٩) وَ ظِلِّ مَمْدُودٍ (واقعه ٣٠)	Q I
	و یاران راست، چه هستند یاران راست. در کنار درختان سدر بی خار. و درختان موز که میوه هایش به صورت فشرده رویهم چیده. و سایه ای پایدار (واقعه ٣٠ / ٢٧)	PT
Replacement by SL Equivalent	On my head, be the prolonged shadow of thy tress: for in that shadow, rest to the distraught heart shall be.	TT
	خوش بود گر محک تجربه آید به میان تا سیه روی شود هر که در او غش باشد (ص. ١٥٩)	ST
	وَ لَتَبْلُوَكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَ الْجُوعِ وَ نَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَ الْأَنْفُسِ وَ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَ بَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ (بقره ١٥٥)	Q I
	قطعاً همه شما را با چیزی از ترس ، گرسنگی ، و کاهش در مالها و جانها و میوه ها، آزمایش می کنیم و بشارت ده به استقامت کنندگان!	PT
	Happy it is, if the touch-stone of experience come into use: so that block of face becometh every one, in whom is alloy.	TT
	بیخود از شعشعه ی پرتو ذاتم کردندباده از جام تجلی صفاتم دادند (ص. ١٧٤)	ST
	وَ لَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَ كَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ تُرَانِي وَ لَكِنِ انظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَ خَرَّ مُوسَى صَعْقًا فَلَمَّا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّ ائْتِنِي بِآيَاتِكَ قَالَ رَبُّهُ إِنَّكَ إِذْ تُنَادِي بِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ (اعراف ١٤٣)	Q I
	و هنگامی که موسی به میعادگاه ما آمد ، و پروردگارش با او سخن گفت ، عرض کرد: «پروردگارا! خودت را به من نشان ده ، تا تو را ببینم!» گفت: «هرگز مرا نخواهی دید! ولی به کوه بنگر ، اگر در جای خود ثابت ماند ، مرا خواهی دید!» اما هنگامی که پروردگارش بر کوه جلوه کرد ، آن را همسان خاک قرار داد و موسی مدهوش به زمین افتاد. چون به هوش	PT

	آمد ، عرض کرد: «خداوندا! منزهی تو ( از اینکه با چشم تو را ببینم )! من به سوی تو بازگشتم! و من نخستین مؤمنانم!»	
	Through the effulgence of the ray of His essence, me senseless, they made: from the cup of splendor of His qualities, me wine they gave.	TT
Omission	No Omission was observed.	

## Appendix B:

Translation procedures used by Salami (2016) (ST= Source Text, QA= Qur'ānic Allusion, PT= Persian Translation, TT= Target Translation)

Omission	این همه شعبده ی خویش که میکرد اینجا سامری پیش عصا و ید بیضا می کرد (ص.۱۳۲)	ST
	فَالْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ (اعراف ۱۰۷) وَتَرَعُ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّظِيرِ (اعراف ۱۰۸)	QA
	(موسی) عصای خود را افکند ناگهان ازدهایی آشکاری شد! (اعراف ۱۰۷) و دست خود را (از گریبان) بیرون آورد سفید (و درخشان) برای بینندگان بود! (اعراف ۱۰۸)	PT
	The tricks that we ourselves behold, by juggling Reason planned: were played by Samir, who opposed the Staff and the White Hand.	TT
Retention by Guidance	که ای صوفی شراب آنکه شود صاف که در شیشه بماند اربعینی (ص. ۴۸۳)	ST
	وَإِذْ نَادَىٰ مُوسَىٰ ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأْتَمَمْنَا بَعْشَرَ قَمٍّ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (اعراف ۱۴۲)	QA
	و با موسی برای عبادت ویژه و دریافت تورات سی شب وعده گذاشتیم و آن را با افزودن ده شب کامل کردیم پس میعادگاه پروردگارش به چهل شب پایان گرفت و موسی هنگامی که به میعادگاه می رفت به برادرش هارون گفت در میان قوم جانشین من باش و به اصلاح بر خیز و از راه و روش مفسدان پیروی مکن.	PT
	You will only see clarity of the wine: if for forty days you let it stand.	TT
Literal Translation	فیض روح القدس از باز مدد فرماید دیگران هم بکنند آنچه مسیحا می کرد (ص. ۱۷۳)	ST
	وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَفَقَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَأَتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيْتَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَا بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنْفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِقْنَا قُلُوبَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ تَعْقِلُونَ «وَأَيَّدْنَا هَارُونَ وَالْقُدُسِ (بقره ۸۷)	QI
	ما به موسی کتاب (تورات) دادیم و بعد از او، پیامبرانی پشت سر هم فرستادیم و به عیسی بن مریم دلایل روشن دادیم و او را به وسیله روح القدس تأیید کردیم. آیا چنین نیست که هر زمان، پیامبری، چیزی بر خلاف هوای نفس شما آورد، در برابر او تکبر کردید (و از ایمان آوردن به او خودداری نمودید) پس عده ای را تکذیب کرده، و جمعی را به قتل رساندید؟	PT
	Anyone who is touched by God's grace can do what Christ, without fail	TT
	بیا ساقی بده رطل گرانم سقاک الله من کاس دهلق (ص. ۴۲۸)	ST
إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا (نبا ۳۱) حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا (نبا ۳۲) وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا (نبا ۳۳) وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا (نبا ۳۴)	QI	

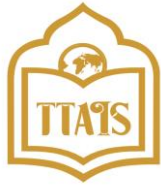
	همانا برای اهل پروا، رستگاری و کامیابی بزرگی است. انواع باغها و انگورها. و همسرانی زیبا و دلربا، همانند و همسال و جامهایی سرشار (نبا ۳۱/۳۴)	PT
	Saki! Come: me, the heavy ritl give: God give thee to drink from a full cup.	TT
	آسمان بار امانت نتوانست کشید قرعه ی فال به نام من دیوانه زدند (ص. ۱۷۵)	ST
	إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَيُّنَ أَنْ يُحْمَلُنَهَا وَ أَسْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَ حَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا (احزاب ۲۷)	QI
	ما امانت (تعهد، تکلیف، و ولایت الهیه) را بر آسمانها و زمین و کوه ها عرضه داشتیم، آنها از حمل آن سر برتافتند، و از آن هراسیدند اما انسان آن را بر دوش کشید او بسیار ظالم و جاهل بود، (چون قدر این مقام عظیم را نشناخت و به خود ستم کرد)!	PT
	Heaven, from its heavy trust aspiring to be free: the duty was allotted, mad as I am, to me.	TT
	شب قدر است و طی شد نامه ی هجر سلام فيه حتی مطلع الفجر(ص. ۲۵۱)	ST
	«سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ» (قدر ۵)	QI
	و سلامتی در آن شب است تا طلوع صبح	PT
	Tis the night of power; and closed is the book of separation: on the other night, is safety to the rising of separation.	TT
	فردا شراب کوثر و حور از برای ماست و امروز نیز ساقی مهری و جام می (ص. ۳۹۴)	ST
	وَ جَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَ حَرِيرًا (انسان ۱۲)	QI
	عَالِيَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٌ خُضْرٌ وَ إِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَ حُلُوًّا أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَ سِقَاهُمْ زَبَبًا شَرَابًا طَهُورًا (انسان ۲۱)	QI
	و بهشت و پریشان را به پاداش این که بر اطاعت خدا و در برابر گزندها و مصیبت ها شکیبایی ورزیدند پاداششان دهد (انسان ۱۲)	PT
	بر بالای بهشتیان، لطیف دیبای سبز و حریر ستبر است و بر دستهایشان دستبند نقره خام، و خدایشان شرابی پاک (و گوارا از کوثر عنایت) بنوشاند (انسان ۲۱)	PT
	To-morrow shall the must of Kausar, and huris make me gay: but I have also moon-faced Saki, and wine-filled cups to-day.	TT
	یوسف گمگشته باز آید به کنعان غم مخور کلبه ی احزان شود روزی گلستان غم مخور (ص. ۲۶۰)	ST
	فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ آوَى إِلَيْهِ أَبْوِيهِ وَ قَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ (یوسف ۹۹)	QA
	و هنگامی که بر یوسف وارد شدند، او پدر و مادر خود را در آغوش گرفت، و گفت: «همگی داخل مصر شوید، که انشاء الله در امن و امان خواهید بود!»	PT
	Do not grieve: Joseph, lost, he returns to Canaan; the hut of sorrow turns to a rose garden, do not grieve.	TT
Retention	لَمَعَ الْبَرْقُ مِنَ الطُّورِ وَ آتَتْ بِهِ فَلَاعِلَى لَكَ آتٍ بِشَهَابٍ قَبَسٍ (ص. ۴۲۵)	ST
	فَلَمَّا قَضَى مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ وَ سَارَ بِأَهْلِهِ آتَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ جَذْوَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ (قصص ۲۹)	QI
	هنگامی که موسی مدت خود را به پایان رسانید و همراه خانواده اش (از مدین به سوی مصر) حرکت کرد، از جانب طور آتشی دید! به خانواده اش گفت: «درنگ کنید که من آتشی دیدم!» (می روم) شاید خبری از آن برای شما بیاورم، یا شعله ای از آتش تا با آن گرم شوید!	PT
	From the direction of Tur, lightening flashed; to it, I inclined: perchance, thee, a brand of bright flame, I may bring.	TT



	چو هست آب حیاتت به دست تشنه ممیر فلا تَمَّتْ وَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ (ص. ۴۳۰)	ST
	أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (انبیاء ۳۰) الَّذِينَ يَسْتَجِيبُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ يَبْغُونَهَا عَوَجًا أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ (ابراهيم ۳)	QA
	آیا کسانی که کفر ورزیدند ندانستند که آسمانها و زمین هر دو به هم پیوسته بودند و ما آن دو را از هم جدا ساختیم و هر چیز زنده ای را از آب پدید آوردیم آیا [باز هم] ایمان نمی آورند. (انبیاء ۳۰) همانها که زندگی دنیا را بر آخرت ترجیح می دهند و ( مردم را ) از راه خدا باز می دارند و می خواهند راه حق را منحرف سازند آنها در گمراهی دوری هستند! ( ابراهیم ۳)	PT
	When in thy hand, is the water of life, thirsty die not: di not; living is everything from water.	TT
Rephrase	نیست در دایره یک نقطه خلاف از کم و بیش که من این مسئله بی چون و چرا می بینم (ص. ۳۴۰)	ST
	الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَاوُتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ (الملك ۴)	QI
	همان که هفت آسمان را طبقه طبقه بیافرید در آفرینش آن [خدای] بخشایشگر هیچ گونه اختلاف [و تفاوتی] نمی بینی بازنگر آیا خلل [و نقصانی] می بینی	PT
	There is not in a circle a point the opposite of more or less: tis as a matter of course, I see.	TT
	اینکه پیرانه سرم صحبت یوسف بنواختاجر صبریست که در کلبه ی احزان کردم (ص. ۲۹۲)	ST
	وَ اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَ الصَّلَاةِ وَ إِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ (بقره ۴۵)	QI
	از صبر و نماز یاری جوید ( و با استقامت و مهار هوسهای درونی و توجه به پروردگار ، نیرو بگیرد ) و این کار ، جز برای خاشعان ، گران است.	PT
	If Joseph fosters me as old I grow: tis for my patience in my call of woe.	TT
	یار مفروش به دنیا که بسی سود نکرد آنکه یوسف به زر ناسره بفروخته بود (ص. ۱۹۹)	ST
	وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَ كَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ (یوسف ۲۱)	QA
و فروختند او را به بهای اندک به چند درهم شمرده شده و بودند در آن از بی رغبتان.	PT	
The Beloved, sell not for the world. Mnot for, much, it profited not the one who, for bse gold, Joseph, had sold.	TT	
Common Words	ز آتش وادی ایمن نه منم خُرَمٌ و بس موسی اینجا به امید قبسی می آید (ص. ۲۲۸)	ST
	إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا. لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجْدٍ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى (طه ۱۰)	QA
	هنگامی که آتشی را دید، پس به خانواده ی خود گفت: قدری درنگ کنید، همانا من آتشی یافتم، شاید (بتوانم) مقداری از آن را برای شما بیاورم یا به واسطه ی (آن) آتش، راهی بیابم. (طه ۱۰)	PT
	Of Wadi Aymans fire, joyful, not only m I: there, Moses in hope of a fire comes.	TT
Replacement by Target Equivalent	چشم حافظ زیر بام قصر آن حوری سرشت شیوه ی جنات تجری تحتها الانهار داشت (ص. ۷۷)	ST
	إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَالِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ (بروج ۱۲) وَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَ عَدَدَ اللَّهِ حَقًّا وَ مَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا (نساء ۶۰)	QI

	<p>همانا برای کسانی که اهل ایمان و عمل صالح هستند، باغ‌هایی بهشتی است که نهرها از زیر آن جاری است، این است رستگاری بزرگ. (بروج ۱۲)</p> <p>و کسانی که ایمان آورده اند و اعمال صالح انجام داده اند ، بزودی آن را در باغهایی از بهشت وارد میکنیم که نهرها از زیر درختانش جاری است جاودانه در آن خواهند ماند. وعده حق خداوند است و کیست که در گفتار و وعده هایش ، از خدا صادقتر باشد؟! (نساء ۶۰)</p>	PT
	Behold in HAFIZ' eyes which wait his huri's palace-roof below: a figure of the garden-grove, the streams of which beneath it flow.	TT
	تکیه بر تقوی و دانش در طریقت کافری است راهرو گر صد هنر دارد توکل بایش (ص. ۲۷۶)	ST
	و يَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَ مَنْ يَتَّوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا (طلاق ۳) قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَ نُسُكِي وَ مَحْيَايَ وَ مَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (انعام ۱۶۲)	QI
	و از جایی که تصور نمی کند ، به او روزی می رساند و نیازهای زندگی اش را برطرف می سازد . و هر کس بر خدا توکل کند ، خدا برای تأمین سعادت او بس است ; چرا که خدا کار خود را به انجام می رساند و خدا برای هر چیزی اندازه ای قرار داده است. (طلاق ۳)	PT
	بگو: «نماز و تمام عبادات من ، و زندگی و مرگ من ، همه برای خداوند پروردگار جهانیان است. (انعام ۱۶۲)	
	Tis a sin to rely on piety and knowledge in love's way: even with hundredfold art, trust in God the wayfarer must not gainsay.	TT
	حضور خلوت انس است و دوستان جمع اند و ان یکاد بخوانید و در فراز کنید (ص. ۲۸۶)	ST
	وَ إِنَّ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُلَاقُواكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَ يُؤَلُّونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ (قلم ۵۲)	QI
	و نزدیک بود آنانکه کافر شدند بزنند تو را با چشمهایشان چون شنیدند قرآن را و می گویند اینک او دیوانه است (قلم ۵۲)	PT
	In familiar solitude friends have tread: close the door after "van yakad" is read.	TT
	بیدلی در همه احوال خدا با او بود او نمی دیدش و از دور خدایا می کرد (ص. ۱۳۲)	ST
	وَ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَ نَعَلَّمَ مَا تُوسُّوسُ بِهِ نَفْسَهُ وَ نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ (ق ۱۶)	QA
	ما انسان را آفریدیم و وسوسه های نفس او را می دانیم ، و ما به او از رگ قلبش نزدیکتریم!	PT
	One left on heart is held by God in every case most dear: but man beholds Him not, and cries to God as one not near.	TT
Replacement by SL Equivalent	در پس آینه طوطی صفتم داشته اند آنچه استاد ازل گفت بگو می گویم (ص. ۱۷۳)	ST
	قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَ لَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنْ أَتَيْتُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَى إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَ الْبَصِيرُ أَ فَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ (انعام ۵۱)	QI
	بگو: «من نمی گویم خزاین خدا نزد من است و من ، ( جز آنچه خدا به من بیاموزد ، ) از غیب آگاه نیستم! و به شما نمی گویم من فرشته ام تنها از آنچه به من وحی می شود پیروی می کنم.»	PT
	بگو: «آیا نابینا و بینا مساویند؟! پس چرا نمی اندیشید؟!»	
	Behind the veil parrot-like, I am trained and entertain: I repeat what the Master has taught me and had me retain.	TT
	ظلّ ممدود خم زلف توام بر سر باد کاندرین سایه قرار دل شیدا باشد (ص. ۱۵۷)	ST
وَ أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ (واقعه ۲۷) فِي سِدْرٍ مَخْضُودٍ (واقعه ۲۸) وَ طَلْحٍ مَنضُودٍ (واقعه ۲۹)	QI	

	وَ ظِلِّ مَمْدُودٍ (واقعه ۳۰)	
	و یاران راست، چه هستند یاران راست. در کنار درختان سدر بی خار. و درختان موز که میوه هایش به صورت فشرده رویهم چیده. و سایه ای پایدار (واقعه ۳۰ / ۲۷)	PT
	On my leader, be the long shadow of thy trees: for in that shadow, rest to the preoccupied heart shall be.	TT
	خوش بود گر محک تجربه آید به میان تا سیه روی شود هر که در او غش باشد (ص. ۱۵۹)	ST
	وَ لَتَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَ الْجُوعِ وَ نَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَ الْأَنْفُسِ وَ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَ بَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ (بقره ۱۵۵)	QI
	قطعاً همه شما را با چیزی از ترس، گرسنگی، و کاهش در مالها و جانها و میوه ها، آزمایش می کنیم و بشارت ده به استقامت کنندگان!	PT
	Well it is, if the touch-stone of testing come into use: so that block of face becometh every one, in who is cutie.	TT
	بیخود از شعشه ی پرتو ذاتم کردند باده از جام تجلی صفاتم دادند (ص. ۱۷۴)	ST
	وَ لَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَ كَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرَ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرَاكَ وَ لَكِنِ انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَ خَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَ أَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (اعراف ۱۴۳)	QA
	و هنگامی که موسی به میعادگاه ما آمد، و پروردگارش با او سخن گفت، عرض کرد: «پروردگارا! خودت را به من نشان ده، تا تو را ببینم!» گفت: «هرگز مرا نخواهی دید! ولی به کوه بنگر، اگر در جای خود ثابت ماند، مرا خواهی دید!» اما هنگامی که پروردگارش بر کوه جلوه کرد، آن را همسان خاک قرار داد و موسی مدهوش به زمین افتاد. چون به هوش آمد، عرض کرد: «خداوندا! منزهی تو (از اینکه با چشم تو را ببینم)! من به سوی تو بازگشتم! و من نخستین مؤمنانم!»	PT
	Ecstatic, my soul was radiant, bright: Sanctified cup of my life, drunk I behaved.	TT



## The Logic of Birds: A Comparative Study of the Qur'ānic Narrative of Solomon and the Ant in Surah An-Naml and the Global Folktale Type of Talking Animals

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### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the similarities and differences between the story of Prophet Solomon (AS) and the ant in Surah An-Naml and the global folktale type known as *The Language of Animals* (Type 670 in the Aarne–Thompson classification). The findings suggest that, although the Qur'ānic account shares certain surface features with folkloric animal tales, it exhibits distinct characteristics that set it apart. These include its use as a vehicle for theological instruction rather than entertainment; its seamless integration into the surrounding verses of Surah An-Naml; its alignment with the prophetic biography and the socio-historical context of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); the blending of revelatory and literary language; and its unique structural design, which supports the thematic objectives of the Surah. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the Qur'ān's narrative features and may help address doubts regarding its authenticity and reliability.

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## 1. Introduction

In his book *Fables of the Ancients: Folklore in the Qur'ān* (2003), Alan Dundes argues that the story of the ant who speaks and causes Prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him) to smile resembles global folktales. He also identifies two other Qur'ānic narratives that, in his view, correspond to international tale types: the story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in Surah Al-Kahf aligns with Type 766, and the account of Mūsā's encounter with the Righteous Servant parallels Type 759 in the Aarne–Thompson index. These claims have been examined and analyzed by the present author in two separate articles. Dundes appears to imply that the Qur'ān, in presenting such stories, may have drawn upon external sources, particularly from Jewish and Christian traditions. However, it is important to note that his intent is not to undermine the Qur'ān's authority. On the contrary, he acknowledges that God may employ such examples—or, in modern terms, folktales—for the purpose of instructing and enlightening humanity. As he writes, “Surely the fables of the ancients have been divinely included in the Qur'ān to be filled with moral teachings for future generations” (p. 203).

Nonetheless, the manner in which Dundes presents his claims may raise certain concerns, particularly given his effort to trace parallels not only within Judeo-Christian traditions but also across global mythologies and the folktales of various cultures. While such comparisons may appear straightforward, they carry potentially significant implications for both Qur'ānic studies and folklore scholarship. The Qur'ān itself affirms its use of parables—even those based on seemingly insignificant elements, such as “a gnat or something even smaller” (al-Baqara 2:26)—to illustrate its teachings. Parables (*amthāl*) and narratives (*qaṣaṣ*) are among the Qur'ān's primary rhetorical and pedagogical strategies. Although the Qur'ānic language is divine and revelatory, its intended audience is human; thus, it naturally employs familiar storytelling techniques—including established narrative structures and genres—to convey its message effectively.

As Mir (1988) observes, the language of Qur'ānic revelation often overlaps with literary language, and literary devices such as narration and parable function as vehicles for transmitting divine discourse. Moreover, unlike the Hebrew Bible or other sacred texts that may present more continuous narrative arcs, the Qur'ān is not a storybook in the conventional sense. Rather, it uses stories as theological instruments, aimed at conveying moral and spiritual truths. These narratives are not isolated or incidental but are deeply embedded within the thematic and rhetorical architecture of each *surah*, contributing to the organic coherence of the surrounding verses. More importantly, they are integrally linked to the Prophetic mission and the socio-historical context of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) time.

Thus, even when Qur'ānic narratives exhibit similarities to stories found in other religious or folkloric traditions, their adaptation within the Qur'ānic framework is both distinctive and theologically intentional. The Qur'ān employs storytelling not for entertainment, but as a means to convey core religious principles, spiritual insights, and prophetic ethics—each aligned with the thematic goals of the respective *surah* and the overarching prophetic mission. This study critically examines Juan Eduardo Dundes's claim regarding the Qur'ānic account of Solomon and the speaking ant, with the aim of exploring the uniqueness of this narrative within the Qur'ānic discourse. Adopting a qualitative and explanatory approach, the research relies on textual and library-based sources for data collection and analysis.

The study begins with a literature review, followed by a close reading of the story of Solomon and the ant (Qur'ān 27:18–19). It then compares this narrative with analogous motifs found in global folklore traditions. The primary focus, however, is on identifying and elucidating the specific narrative strategies and theological functions of this story within the Qur'ānic framework. The significance of this research lies in its effort to respond to prevailing critiques by highlighting the structural, thematic, and doctrinal depth of Qur'ānic storytelling. In doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how this particular narrative functions within the Qur'ān's revelatory logic.

## **2. Literature Review**

The existing scholarship on Qur'ānic narratives may be broadly categorized under four main approaches: traditional exegetical readings, Western Orientalist perspectives, Muslim scholarly interpretations, and comparative and interdisciplinary methodologies.

### *2.1 Traditional Exegetical Approaches*

Since the revelation of the Qur'ān, its narratives (qaṣaṣ) have received sustained attention from classical Muslim exegetes. Early exegeses primarily sought to interpret these stories within the broader framework of Islamic theology, ethics, and moral instruction. Over time, the exegetical tradition expanded to incorporate Isrā'īliyyāt, narratives of Jewish and Christian origin, leading to increased comparative engagement with parallels found in the Hebrew Bible and other Judeo-Christian sources.

### *2.2 Western Orientalist Approaches*

Beginning in the 19th century, Western scholars such as Theodor Nöldeke (1860) and Hartwig Hirschfeld (1902) began examining Qur'ānic narratives through the lenses of philology, historical criticism, and biblical studies. Nöldeke sought to contextualize Qur'ānic stories within the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), linking them to specific historical and biographical events. Hirschfeld, on the other hand, emphasized their resemblance to Jewish and Christian traditions, suggesting shared narrative motifs. In the 20th century, this line of inquiry was continued by scholars such as Richard Bell (1937) and W. Montgomery Watt (1970). Bell argued that certain Qur'ānic narratives may have been adapted from earlier Judeo-Christian sources but were reconfigured within a distinctively Qur'ānic framework. Watt, while acknowledging these influences, highlighted the moral and spiritual purposes of these narratives within the Qur'ānic message.

### *2.3 Muslim Scholarly Approaches*

Among Muslim scholars, Amīn al-Khūlī (d. 1966) was a pioneer in analyzing Qur'ānic narratives from a literary and aesthetic perspective. He proposed a typology of narratives—such as historical, allegorical, and others—which laid the groundwork for subsequent literary and narratological explorations. Over time, this initial interest developed into more nuanced and methodologically sophisticated narrative-analytical approaches within contemporary Muslim scholarship.

### *2.4 Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approaches*

In recent decades, the study of Qur'ānic narratives has increasingly incorporated insights from literary theory and narratology. Scholars such as Hari (2009) have examined specific

features of Qur'ānic storytelling through a narratological framework, highlighting its structural and rhetorical complexity. In the field of comparative folklore, Alan Dundes (2003), in his book *Folklore in the Qur'ān*, argued that certain Qur'ānic narratives resemble global folktale types. His claims generated significant responses from both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. Hari (2020) reviewed many of these critiques, offering an assessment of their validity. In more recent work, Hari (forthcoming) has further analyzed Dundes's arguments, particularly with regard to the stories of the Sleepers of the Cave and Moses's encounter with the Righteous Servant. Additionally, Penchansky (2021) examined various Qur'ānic narratives, including the story of Solomon and the ant, with particular attention to the significance of Solomon's laughter.

Despite the extensive scholarship on Qur'ānic narratives, a comprehensive and critical analysis of Dundes's claim regarding the resemblance between the Qur'ānic account of Solomon and the ant and the global folktale motif of "talking animals" remains lacking. This study aims to fill that gap by closely examining the Qur'ānic narrative in relation to Dundes's folkloristic hypothesis, with particular emphasis on the cause and significance of Solomon's laughter. In doing so, the paper seeks both to evaluate Dundes's thesis and to illuminate the unique features of Qur'ānic narrative structure and theological purpose. To the best of our knowledge, no previous study has offered a focused, in-depth analysis of this specific narrative comparison. Storytelling holds a central position in the Qur'ān, functioning as one of its primary means for conveying divine messages. One of the most illustrative examples of this narrative distinctiveness is the story of Solomon (Sulaiman) and the ant, which introduces the Qur'ānic concept of *mantīq al-ṭayr*: the language of the birds. This concept not only highlights Solomon's extraordinary ability to communicate with the natural world but also embodies the Qur'ānic worldview, in which all elements of creation participate in the transmission of divine truths.

In parallel, the Aarne–Thompson classification system (1961), a widely recognized framework in folklore studies, provides a useful tool for comparing global folktales. It offers a valuable lens through which to evaluate claims such as those made by Alan Dundes, who argued that certain Qur'ānic narratives resemble typological patterns found in world folklore. Nevertheless, even when superficial similarities are apparent, the Qur'ānic rendition of these stories remains distinct, shaped by theological purpose and the prophetic context of its revelation. This narrative distinctiveness underscores the importance of close, context-sensitive readings of each story within the Qur'ānic corpus, with careful attention to its placement within the surah and its alignment with the overarching mission of the Prophet.

### **3. Analysis and Discussion**

Since ancient times, the interaction and relationship between humans and animals have been central to the cultures of various civilizations. Animals have played significant roles in human life, and people have long sought to reflect animal behavior, characteristics, and temperaments in both oral and written narratives. Through these stories, they symbolically convey ethical, social, historical, and political concepts. One of the most prominent expressions of this is found in the genre known as the beast fable.

Additionally, many cultures contain accounts of mythological, religious, and historical figures who communicate with animals. The earliest references to such interactions are noted by James Frazer (1888), who cites certain historical sources. Frazer mentions the ancient belief that animals—and even plants—could communicate among themselves and,

more broadly, with humans (p. 93). This belief, once common due to the close bond between humans and nature, gradually declined as humans began to distinguish themselves from the natural world, viewing themselves as superior and thus distancing themselves from it (Frazer, 1888). Frazer argues that the primary difference between human and animal language lies in structure: human language is governed by rules, whereas animal communication lacks such formal organization (p. 94). Just as speakers of one language may not understand another, humans cannot comprehend the language of animals (p. 93). Nevertheless, Frazer maintains that animals and birds possess their own distinct forms of communication, and in some cases, different species have unique systems of linguistic exchange (Frazer, 1888). He also claims that certain peoples and ethnic groups have particular abilities to communicate with animals. For instance, he notes that Arabs are especially attuned to ravens, and the Etruscans, who lived in the Italian Peninsula 700 years before Christ, were believed to communicate with eagles (Frazer, 1888).

Frazer goes on to recount several folktales and legends from different cultures concerning the language of animals. For instance, he cites a Syrian legend involving the ability to understand the speech of lions and bears. In Swabian folktales, a man is said to comprehend the language of geese (p. 95). Frazer also references various mythical and historical figures reputed to have communicated with animals and birds. One example is a 5th-century French prose legend about Alexander the Great, who was allegedly born in a glass case carried by eight giraffes, accompanied by a magician capable of speaking the language of animals (p. 95). He further refers to the Qur'ānic account of Solomon and the ant, as well as an Arabic legend claiming Solomon could converse with all animals. Quoting Gustav Weil (1845), Frazer notes the Islamic belief that “all birds and many (if not all) animals communicate in their own language” (p. 96). However, he points out that such beliefs are not unique to Islamic tradition, as many other cultures have held similar views. Frazer continues by recounting numerous stories from diverse traditions, including tales from *The Parrot Book (Tuti-nama)* and *The Thousand and One Nights*, that explore the idea of animals possessing their own form of language.

Róheim (1953) analyzes several cross-cultural tales of animals—particularly snakes—communicating with humans, interpreting them through a psychoanalytic lens. In many of these stories, a person gains the ability to understand the speech of animals but is bound by the condition that they must not reveal this secret. Notably, upon acquiring this ability, the individual often begins to laugh—an involuntary reaction that signals to those nearby that something unusual has occurred. This laughter typically prompts others, especially the person's spouse, to demand an explanation. The individual warns that revealing the secret would result in their death. Interestingly, a similar motif appears in both the Bible and the Qur'ān: when Solomon understands the words of the ant, he also bursts into laughter. Mustansir Mir (1991) cites Solomon's encounter with the ant in Surah An-Naml as an instance of Qur'ānic subtlety (*laṭā'if*). Folklorist Alan Dundes links the motif of laughter in Solomon's story to Type 456 in the Aarne–Thompson classification system of folk narratives.

Dundes identifies what he considers the earliest recorded version of the animal language tale in a 3rd-century Buddhist narrative. In this story, a king is granted the ability to understand the language of animals after saving the king of dragons—on the strict condition that he never reveal this secret. Later, the king overhears two butterflies discussing food and laughs aloud. When the queen questions the cause of his laughter, it leads to a crisis (p. 102). Dundes also cites an Indian variant of the tale, in which a king earns the gift of animal speech



after rescuing the king of serpents. While eating honey, a drop falls, and an observing ant calls to its fellows, proclaiming that the king's honey jar has broken and they should come feast. The king laughs at the ants' conversation, prompting the queen to demand an explanation (p. 193). In another version, a snake bestows the gift of animal speech on a man, who later laughs after overhearing ants discussing how to hide from him. When his wife insists on knowing the reason and he refuses to tell her, she dies of heartbreak (cited in Frazer, 1888, pp. 171–172). Frazer also records two Jewish versions of the tale, including one in which a man is granted the ability to speak with animals by the Prophet Solomon (p. 456).

The Thousand and One Nights includes a tale about a peasant who understands the language of animals, with his knowledge of their conversations driving the plot forward. In *The Parrot Book*—originally the Indian *Suka Saptati* (“Seventy Tales”), a parrot recounts the story of a lady and a laughing fish. In this tale, a prince offers grilled fish to his wife, who refuses to touch or even look at the foreign fish. Suddenly, the fish laughs so loudly that the entire city hears it. The prince then sets out to uncover the reason behind the laughter, and the narrative unfolds in a story-within-a-story structure, a hallmark of *Tuti-nama* and similar works (Al-e Ahmad and Daneshvar, 1994, p. 23). Zia al-Nakhshabī (8th century AH) includes this tale in a chapter titled “The Lustful Woman and the Laughing Fish” (p. 203). In the 37th story of his collection, a prince becomes the servant of a snake and, in return, gains immense wealth. In the 43rd tale, a man cuts off the tail of a female snake. The male snake initially seeks revenge but, upon learning that the female was at fault, rewards the man by teaching him the language of animals. Frazer also references this narrative, as preserved in the Turkish translation of the *Tuti-nama* (p. 449). Tale 45 recounts the story of “The Benevolent Prince and the Black Snake.” A similar motif appears in Lorimer’s collection of Kermani and Bakhtiari folktales, in a story titled *The Black Snake and the White Snake*.

As Dundes observes, the Aarne–Thompson Tale Type Index categorizes “The Language of Animals” under Type 670 (p. 233). In this tale type, a man acquires the ability to understand animal speech, and his wife becomes determined to discover his secret. A rooster eventually offers the man advice on how to handle the situation (*ibid*). The Aarne–Thompson system also identifies thematic parallels between this tale and other types, notably Type 517 (“The Boy Who Learned Many Things”) (p. 186) and Type 671 (“Learning Three Languages”) (p. 234). In Type 517, the protagonist is a boy who learns, among other things, the language of birds, who then foretell his future wealth and even the subservience of his parents.

### 3.1. *The Qur’ān’s Account of the Story of Solomon and the Ant in Surah An-Naml*

Surah An-Naml is the 27th chapter of the Qur’ān in the canonical order of the mushaf, situated between Surah al-Shu‘ara and Surah al-Qasas. Chronologically, it is considered the 48th surah revealed and is classified as Meccan. The surah opens with an affirmation of the Qur’ān’s divine origin, describing it as a revelation from the All-Knowing, All-Wise. Its central theme revolves around the retelling of stories concerning earlier prophets, including Moses, the people of Thamud, and Lot. A recurring narrative pattern connects these accounts: God sends a prophet to guide a community; the people, however, reject the prophet’s message due to arrogance and injustice. Despite growing opposition, the prophet gathers a small group of believers. Eventually, the prophet prays for divine intervention. A punishment is then inflicted upon the disbelievers, who are destroyed, while the faithful are saved.

In Surah An-Naml, the prophetic narratives are recounted in a condensed form, likely because they are addressed in greater detail elsewhere in the Qur'ān. These accounts may be characterized as "punishment stories," where the central theme is divine retribution. What sets this surah apart, however, is the inclusion—for the first time—of a narrative not centered on punishment: the story of Solomon and the ants. In this account, Solomon overhears an ant warning its companions to take cover lest they be trampled by his army. Hearing this, Solomon smiles in amusement and gratitude. The narrative begins in verse 14, following a reference to Moses and Pharaoh. This earlier passage reiterates the familiar pattern: the disbelievers reject the truth out of arrogance and injustice and ultimately suffer the consequences of their corruption. Yet, after this warning, the surah shifts in tone and presents an image of divine favor and joy: the special knowledge and insight granted to David and Solomon:

“Indeed, We gave knowledge to David and Solomon, and they said, ‘Praise be to Allah, who has favored us over many of His believing servants.’” (27:15)

“Until, when they came upon the Valley of the Ants, an ant said, ‘O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Solomon and his soldiers crush you while they do not perceive.’” (27:18)

“So [Solomon] smiled, laughing at her words, and said, ‘My Lord! Inspire me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and my parents, and to do righteousness that You approve, and admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous servants.’” (27:19)

The story continues with the episode of the hoopoe (hudhud), who brings Solomon news of the Queen of Sheba (verses 20–22). This leads to a diplomatic exchange and culminates in the Queen's arrival at Solomon's court and her eventual submission to the One God (verses 29–44). Following this account of wisdom, diplomacy, and divine guidance, the surah shifts once again—this time returning to the theme of prophetic rejection. It recounts how the people of Thamud plotted to kill the prophet Ṣāliḥ (verses 45–53), followed by the story of the people of Lot, who conspired to expel him from their town (verses 54–58). The surah then turns to address the Prophet Muhammad directly, encouraging him not to be disheartened by the deniers. It concludes with a reflection on the Day of Resurrection, reminders of divine judgment, and an exhortation to worship God and recite the Qur'ān.

Exegetical sources have offered extensive commentary on the various dimensions of Solomon's encounter with the ants. In *Tafsir Nemuneh*, Makarem Shirazi (1992, vol. 15, p. 431) notes that some commentators interpret Solomon's smile as an expression of joy upon realizing that the ants recognized the justice and piety of his army. Others suggest that his smile was one of amazement at his God-given ability to hear even the faintest voices, such as that of an ant despite the grandeur and commotion of his military procession (p. 434). Makarem himself highlights the remarkable nature of the ant's behavior: that it not only spoke but also issued a warning to its companions with foresight and concern. It is this sense of wonder, he argues, that most likely elicited Solomon's smile (p. 433).

In *Tafsir Noor*, Qara'ati (2009, vol. 6, pp. 402–407) presents a series of moral and ethical lessons drawn from the story of Solomon and the ants. He highlights Solomon's response as exemplary leadership—reacting with patience and good humor upon hearing the ant's warning that the army might unknowingly trample them. Qara'ati emphasizes that God humbles Solomon, despite his immense power, through the voice of a tiny ant, thereby preserving his spiritual equilibrium. He suggests that one should find joy when even the

smallest creatures recognize and appreciate one's justice. Additionally, Qara'ati notes that the laughter of prophets is marked by calm smiles (tabassum) rather than loud laughter or mockery (p. 406). Similarly, in *al-Mizan*, Allameh Tabataba'i (1995, vol. 15, p. 503) refers to *Ruh al-Ma'ani* (vol. 19, p. 179) to distinguish between tabassum (a gentle smile) and dhahik (ordinary laughter). He affirms that Solomon's gift of understanding the language of birds naturally extended to that of ants, highlighting the consistency of this extraordinary knowledge (p. 502).

Most exegetical works focus primarily on the immediate verses of this story, often overlooking the broader narrative structure of the surah—particularly the relationship between this episode and other punishment-based narratives involving Moses, Salih, and Lot. This oversight prompts several critical questions:

- What is the connection between the story of Solomon and the ant—and the subsequent episode involving the Queen of Sheba—and the larger narrative framework of Surah An-Naml, especially in relation to the prophetic model it presents?
- How does this story differ from the types of folktales categorized by Dundes?
- What distinguishes the Qur'ānic retelling from other versions or parallels?
- If the motif of laughter serves as a point of similarity between this story and the aforementioned folktales, how might this laughter be interpreted within Qur'ānic or Islamic theological discourse?
- How does the inclusion of this non-punitive story within a surah otherwise dominated by punishment narratives affect the overall thematic coherence of the chapter?
- Regarding inter-sural relationships, what narrative or thematic connections exist between Surah An-Naml and its immediate neighbors, Surah al-Shu'ara and Surah al-Qasas?

### 3.2. *The Qur'ānic Logic of Birds and the Language of Animals in Non-Qur'ānic Narratives*

The Qur'ānic concept of *mantiq al-tayr* (the language or logic of birds) both parallels and diverges from non-Qur'ānic traditions that explore the theme of animal communication. As noted by Frazer and others—and clearly evident in the international tale types classified by Aarne, Thompson and later by Marzolph, a common motif features a human protagonist—often a young man, a Brahmin prince, a nameless wanderer, or someone of humble origin—who earns the ability to understand the language of animals as a reward for an act of kindness toward a creature, typically a snake, dragon, or king of snakes. However, this gift usually comes with a condition: the protagonist must not reveal this secret, often to his wife, or he will die. Upon understanding the speech of animals, he frequently bursts into laughter after uncovering a hidden mystery. His wife persistently demands to know the cause of his laughter. At first, he resists but eventually concedes—only to withhold the secret at the final moment, thereby preserving his life. Interestingly, these tales never explain how the protagonist acquires the ability to understand animal speech; the knowledge simply appears, granted by the grateful creature.

Because humans are generally incapable of understanding animal speech, this knowledge bestows upon the protagonist an extraordinary, often magical power. In many of these

stories, the protagonist responds with laughter or a loud guffaw upon overhearing the animals. In some versions, particularly Indian variants like the *Tutinama* (Tales of a Parrot)—it is the animals themselves, such as a fried fish, who laugh at an inappropriate reaction from a woman upon seeing a man, with the sound heard by all. By contrast, the Qur'ānic account of *mantiq al-tayr* is of a different nature. The Qur'ān first mentions a special kind of knowledge granted to David and Solomon, then refers to Solomon as David's heir, who proclaims:

*“Solomon inherited David, and he said: ‘O people, we have been taught the language of the birds, and we have been given everything. Indeed, this is a clear favor.’”* (Qur'ān 27:16)

Solomon regards his knowledge of the language of birds as a divine favor. As Allameh Tabataba'i explains—while engaging with other interpretations—there is no contradiction between Solomon's understanding of bird speech and his comprehension of the ants' speech in the same narrative; in fact, the surrounding verses support this view (al-Mīzān, p. 503). Unlike human folklore, where the protagonist earns the ability to understand animal speech through an act of kindness, the Qur'ān presents Solomon as receiving this knowledge—along with dominion over the winds and jinn—because he is a devout servant, penitent and in constant worship of God. Furthermore, Solomon asks for forgiveness, and in response, God grants him a vast kingdom.

In human tales, this knowledge often leads to personal wealth and success. In the Qur'ān, however, Solomon uses his God-given powers to invite others, such as the Queen of Sheba to accept the truth. Thus, divine gifts are directed toward theological and ethical purposes. In the same surah, the story of Moses and his confrontation with Pharaoh is also recounted. Pharaoh, despite his wealth and power, ultimately gains nothing because he exploits others, especially the Children of Israel. Similarly, in the story of Salih, his opponents seek to expel him and accuse his followers of bringing misfortune. They plot to kill him, but God counters their schemes with a greater plan and destroys them all. Likewise, the people of Lot are annihilated for their wickedness.

At first glance, the three stories of punishment—Pharaoh, the people of Salih, and the people of Lot—may seem unrelated to the story of Solomon, which is often seen as one of divine mercy. Yet, by juxtaposing these narratives, the Qur'ān accomplishes a dual purpose: warning disbelievers, particularly the Prophet's contemporaries, while offering hope and glad tidings to believers. The story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba exemplifies divine mercy and success, whereas the accounts of Pharaoh and the others convey divine retribution. Notably, the phrase *la yash'urūn* (“they perceive not”) appears both in the story of Solomon and the ants and in the story of Lot's people, though in different contexts: the ants warn each other that Solomon's army might unknowingly crush them, while the disbelievers among Lot's people remain unaware of God's impending judgment. This subtle repetition underscores the Qur'ān's rhetorical cohesion.

Ultimately, what makes the Qur'ānic account both original and distinctive is the organic interconnection between Solomon's story and the broader themes of the surah, including the Prophetic mission. The narrative of Solomon and the ants, situated between accounts of destruction and salvation, functions both as a lesson in mercy and as a subtle reminder of the fate awaiting those who either heed or disregard divine guidance.

### 3.3) Solomon's Laughter

Another element that has led Dundes to associate the story of Solomon and the ant with global folktale motifs is the motif of laughter: in both traditions, the protagonist laughs at the speech of an animal. Meir (1991) refers to Solomon's laughter as an example of Qur'ānic subtlety, while Tamer (2009) considers it a manifestation of mutual wit and humor:

The ant, having grasped the gravity of the threat, utters a humorous line, implying that Solomon and his army might trample over the ants unintentionally and without realizing it. This brief utterance unveils a dignified form of humor, which arises from the hidden contrast between the grandeur of Solomon's army and the minuteness of the ants. The humor is further intensified by the fact that it occurs in an essentially serious context. On the other hand, Solomon, who perceives the ant's ironic tone mixed with caution, responds in kind with laughter. He smiles and laughs at the ant's words and, through his subsequent prayer, demonstrates his full awareness of God's grandeur and omnipotence. Thus, the story reveals two distinct types of humor: humor that arises within serious situations, and humor derived from a voluntary relinquishing of power by a figure {Solomon} whose authority, in this context, is absolute (p. 14).

Scholars have long discussed the causes and functions of laughter and humor under three major theories: *Relief Theory*, *Superiority Theory*, and *Incongruity Theory*. Relief theory, one of the most prevalent psychological and physiological explanations for laughter, is associated with Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud. According to this view, laughter serves as the release of accumulated psychic energy resulting from daily stress, anxiety, inner conflict, and frustration. Through laughter, this pent-up energy is discharged, bringing about a sense of ease and emotional relief. This theory posits that the physical jolt experienced during laughter, and the intensity of loud or uncontrollable laughter, are direct expressions of the quantity of released energy. Therefore, laughter is primarily a mechanism for alleviating anxiety and internal tension, aimed more at the receiver of humor (the laugher).

The superiority theory, attributed to Plato and Aristotle, holds that laughter arises when an individual feels superior to another person or situation. In contrast, incongruity theory shifts the focus from emotional to cognitive dimensions of humor. Here, laughter is seen as a rational reaction to unexpected or illogical situations or juxtapositions. It emerges when two elements, ideas, situations, or perceptions, that are usually incompatible suddenly appear to be connected. Interestingly, both Superiority and Incongruity theories agree that laughter stems from a form of contrast or duality. However, in Superiority Theory, this duality is comparative and often involves the laugher's assessment of themselves in relation to others or their former self. In incongruity theory, while superiority may not be entirely absent, the contrast does not necessarily require such comparison.

So how might Solomon's laughter be interpreted within this theoretical framework? Without delving into excessive detail, it becomes evident that neither Solomon's laughter, nor the laughter seen in folk tales, fits well with the Relief Theory. The characters in such stories, including Solomon, do not laugh as a means of releasing internal stress or conflict. That said, Solomon's smile may reflect a moment of tension reduction: upon hearing the ant's concern and taking steps to avoid harm, he may have felt a sense of comfort and relief that prompted a gentle smile.

Nevertheless, the primary causes of his laughter are arguably better explained through Superiority Theory and, more convincingly, Incongruity Theory. According to the former,

laughter occurs when the individual perceives themselves in a dominant or superior position. In the latter, it arises from the contradiction between the laugher's situation and that of the humorous object. In practice, these two theories are often intertwined, and their functions overlap to the extent that a sharp boundary between them is difficult to maintain. In folktales, the laugher's superiority is usually marked by the acquisition of magical knowledge or power that sets them apart from others. For example, when a character gains the ability to understand the speech of non-human creatures, this knowledge places them in an elevated position and may elicit a smile or laughter that signals this newfound superiority. Yet, the underlying cause of laughter is not just this sense of superiority but the comic incongruity created by the contrast between the magical character and the mundane world around them.

In the story of Solomon and the ant, Solomon's dominion over all creatures and natural forces, granted to him by God, makes him a uniquely powerful figure. When he enters the Valley of the Ants, flanked by his immense army of humans, jinn, and birds, he is fully aware of the power he wields. Still, as a prophet, Solomon never flaunts this might arrogantly. On the contrary, the Qur'ān depicts him as humble, devout, and repentant—an appreciative servant of divine grace who possesses wisdom and can understand the language of animals.

Thus, his laughter might stem not from boastfulness, but from a profound awareness of his role in the cosmos and his responsibility over creation. The core of Solomon's laughter likely lies in the stark incongruity between two opposing situations: the grandeur of his massive army and the concern of a tiny ant worried about her fellow ants. The idea that a single, minuscule ant would fear being crushed by such a formidable force—one that she assumes may not even notice her existence—creates a humorous paradox.

The first layer of incongruity lies in the sheer disproportion between the size of Solomon's army and that of the ant colony. The second lies in the contrast between the commander of the army—Solomon, likely mounted on horseback and commanding legions—and the “commander” of the ants, herself tiny but astute, efficiently leading her colony. Like Solomon, the ant leader seems aware of every individual under her care. The fact that Solomon later in the story inquires about the absence of the hoopoe (*hud-hud*), showing his detailed oversight of his forces, parallels the ant's concern for her own.

These multilayered incongruities, of scale, speech, command, and cognition, collectively contribute to the subtle humor of the episode. They transform what is initially a serious and potentially perilous encounter into a moment of reflection, humility, and gentle amusement, captured in Solomon's smile. (Table 1).

However, some scholars, including Penchansky (2019), offer a divergent view. Based on Solomon's interrogation of the hoopoe bird and his treatment of the people and queen of Sheba, Penchansky argues that Solomon's laughter is an expression of anger and wrath. He even claims that Solomon's troops trample the ants as they march on. It is worth exploring why Penchansky makes such a claim. First, Penchansky sees parallels between the Qur'ānic Solomon and the Solomon of the Book of Kings in the Hebrew Bible (p. 113). According to him, in both sources, Solomon is a majestic and glorious king. Secondly, he finds a stronger resemblance between the Qur'ānic Solomon and the Solomon of the Song of Songs: a powerful king who commands all. Penchansky argues that this overwhelming power links the Biblical Solomon with the one depicted in Surah An-Naml (Penchansky, 2019).

Table 1. Contrasts and Incongruities Between the Army of Solomon and the Army of Ants

Aspect	Solomon's Army	Army of Ants	Contrast and Incongruity
Size and Magnitude	A mighty army marching with military order, dominating both earth and sky.	A vast yet small and orderly army of ants, each minding its own task.	The grandeur of Solomon's army contrasts with the minuteness of the ants; the great must be mindful of the small.
Power and Authority	Solomon, the supreme commander, leads the army with boundless strength and power.	The ant commander, though tiny in size, effectively leads the ant army.	The giant figure of Solomon versus the tiny ant queen; both exercise efficient leadership.
Command and Awareness	Solomon is fully aware of his army's presence and absence—even noticing the missing hoopoe.	The ant leader addresses the entire army, instructing them to return to their nests.	Solomon's command over a vast army mirrors the ant leader's control over a small one; both demonstrate comprehensive awareness.
Leadership Capacity	Commands an enormous army of humans and jinn.	Rules over a highly structured ant army.	Leadership in both large and small realms; both exhibit organization, discipline, and authority.
Ant's Perception vs. Reality	The ant says: "Lest Solomon and his troops crush you unknowingly" (lā yash'urūn).	Solomon hears this and ensures his troops are careful not to harm the ants.	The ant imagines Solomon is unaware, while the reality is that he is fully conscious and considerate.
Overall Situational Contrast	A grand and majestic army moving with splendor.	A minuscule yet disciplined and efficient force.	The juxtaposition of the immense and the minute generates wonder and ultimately makes Solomon smile.

Referring to the various portrayals of Solomon in texts such as the Book of Wisdom and the Proverbs, Penchansky argues that Surah An-Naml introduces new dimensions to Solomon's character, depicting him as a king commanding vast supernatural army. He observes that Muslims and the Islamic exegetical tradition generally present Solomon as a just ruler. Accordingly, Solomon instructs his troops to be mindful of the ants and avoid trampling them (p. 115). However, Penchansky contends that, given Solomon's treatment of the hoopoe and the Queen of Sheba, it is unlikely that he and his armies would have passed by the ants without crushing some. Nonetheless, he considers such behavior natural and expected of a powerful commander, who, by definition, must exercise firm authority over subordinates (p. 122).

However, in light of Solomon's prayer to God—overflowing with love, gratitude, and thankfulness—it seems unlikely that his laughter was anything but joyful. He rejoices at seeing how a tiny ant warns its fellow ants of Solomon's approaching army and guides them back to their nest. More importantly, from an intertextual perspective, this story stands in contrast to the punishment-centered narratives in the surrounding surahs—such as those of

Moses, Lot, Salih, Hud, Abraham, Noah, and Shu‘ayb in Surahs al-Shu‘ara’ and al-Qasas. In contrast, the narrative in Surah An-Naml is mercy-centered, offering believers glad tidings of God’s mercy and forgiveness—especially for those who, like the Queen of Sheba, despite her power and wealth, ultimately submit to God and embrace faith.

In this light, it is not far-fetched to interpret this mercy-centered story, placed amidst so many punishment-centered ones, as a form of *comic relief*—a story that lifts the reader’s spirits with a moment of joy and hope in the midst of tales of destruction and rebellion. Therefore, in concluding reflections on Solomon’s laughter in Surah An-Naml, one may argue that this moment contains layers of meaning that deepen our understanding of this Qur’ānic episode. These can be summarized as follows:

- **Wonder at the Ant’s Intelligence:** As a prophet endowed by God with immense wisdom and the ability to understand the language of animals, Solomon’s laughter may reflect astonishment at the insight of a tiny ant—able to perceive danger and warn her peers to avoid harm.

- **Gratitude to God:** Solomon’s laughter may also signify his thankfulness to God for granting him the extraordinary ability to comprehend the speech of animals. This divine gift enables him to be aware of the ants’ condition and prevent them from being harmed, making his laughter a joyful expression of gratitude.

- **Divine Power and Majesty:** The laughter might also represent Solomon’s contemplation of God’s greatness—how He has empowered even the smallest of creatures, like the ant, with the capacity to communicate and recognize threats. It reflects the divine wisdom and order of the universe, in which every creature has a role and purpose.

- **Calm and Assurance:** Solomon’s laughter could reflect a sense of calm and confidence. He is pleased that he can use his gift to prevent harm to even the smallest beings, revealing his prophetic compassion toward all creatures. It follows that if a prophet shows such sensitivity toward tiny beings, he would be even more attentive to the well-being of human beings, the most honored of God’s creation, striving for their welfare in both this world and the next.

- **Moral Instruction:** This laughter offers moral insight to the Qur’ānic audience across all times. Though Solomon is a powerful king and prophet, he pays close attention to the words of a small creature and treats it with respect. Readers, too, are taught to value all of God’s creation regardless of size or strength. Just as Solomon offers thanks to God, readers are invited to always express gratitude for divine blessings. It is noteworthy that gratitude is one of the main themes of Surah An-Naml, emphasized as a quality of those who are rightly guided—those who establish prayer, give zakat, and are certain of the Hereafter (v. 2). The Qur’ān, as a clear Book, offers glad tidings for such guided souls.

#### 4. Conclusion

The story of Solomon and the ant, as narrated in Surah An-Naml, appears for the first time in the Qur’ān and, unlike many other Qur’ānic narratives that may share parallels with earlier religious texts, this episode has no known equivalent in other sacred scriptures. Therefore, the claim made by Alan Dundes—namely, that this story resembles the global tale-type of “The Language of Animals”—is inaccurate, if by this he intends to suggest a direct influence on the Qur’ān. However, as Dundes himself clarifies, his aim is not to argue



for Qur'ānic dependence but rather to highlight certain thematic similarities. Nonetheless, given the antiquity and stature of the Qur'ān, if any influence is to be proposed, it would be more plausible to suggest that global tale-types may have drawn motifs and themes from sacred texts, including the Qur'ān rather than the other way around. Even if similar motifs appeared in pre-Islamic stories from other cultures, such as Indian folklore, the mere existence of one or two examples cannot justify the claim of Qur'ānic borrowing. It is also notable that, despite the extensive treatment of David and Solomon in the Hebrew Bible and other Jewish texts, no mention is made of an episode involving Solomon and an ant.

The Qur'ān does not employ such narratives for entertainment or mere storytelling. Rather, the clear intention is to use these stories as vehicles for conveying theological, ethical, and didactic messages. Often, these stories are intricately connected to the context of the Prophet's own life and mission. Therefore, even if some thematic similarities between the Qur'ānic story of Solomon and the ant and certain folkloric traditions from other cultures can be traced—as Dundes suggests—what truly distinguishes the Qur'ānic narrative is its deep intertextual coherence. Specifically, this story is interwoven with the larger narrative structure of Surah An-Naml and is also connected to the stories in adjacent chapters such as Surah al-Shu'ara and Surah al-Qasas. These interconnections reveal a broader design in which Qur'ānic stories are not isolated fragments but are part of a cohesive, organically structured narrative system.

In summary, this study arrives at several key conclusions. While the Qur'ānic story of Solomon and the ants shares some superficial similarities with global tale types, it exhibits significant differences that reflect the unique features of Qur'ānic storytelling. The Qur'ān does not recount stories merely for entertainment; rather, it uses them as vehicles to convey profound religious and moral principles. The internal coherence of the narrative, along with its close connection to the surrounding verses, highlights its special role within the structure of Surah An-Naml. Moreover, the story gains additional significance when considered in light of the Prophet's biography and the socio-historical context of the revelation. Importantly, the narrative's rhetorical structure and literary formulation are not borrowed from folklore but arise from the Qur'ān's own theological and literary logic. This is further emphasized by the use of literary devices such as metaphor, symbolism, and elevated language, which reveal the sophisticated artistry embedded in the Qur'ānic discourse and underscore the depth of its revelatory message.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that future research approach other Qur'ānic narratives with a similarly comprehensive methodology—one that takes into account intertextual patterns, prophetic context, and the historical setting of revelation—to deepen our understanding of the unique character of Qur'ānic storytelling.

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## Investigating the Impact of Explicitation of the Situational Context on the Quality of Qur'ān Translation into English

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### ABSTRACT

Situational context plays a crucial role in translation studies. In Qur'ān translation, understanding *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* (occasions of revelation) is essential, as misinterpretations may arise without it. This qualitative study explores the impact of situational context explicitation on the quality of English translations of the Qur'ān. Four Shia translations, Nasr, Shakir, Saffarzadeh, and Mir, were selected due to their shared exegetical sources. Klaudy's (2008) explicitation typology provided the framework for classifying types of explicitation. Analysis of 100 randomly selected verses revealed that explicitation of situational context, particularly the occasions of revelation, is present in all four translations. Pragmatic explicitation was the predominant type observed. The findings suggest that incorporating situational context into translations enhances readers' comprehension of the Qur'ān's meaning.

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## 1. Introduction

The Holy Qur'ān, as one of the sacred texts, continues to attract a growing number of readers among both Muslims and non-Muslims worldwide. It is read in its original Arabic form as well as through translations of its meanings into various languages. Revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) over a period of 23 years, this divine book possesses remarkable linguistic, stylistic, rhetorical, and textual features that distinguish it from other scriptures, elevating it as a timeless miracle intended to guide humanity across all eras. Like other sacred texts, the Holy Qur'ān addresses both specific and general audiences. The specific audience refers to the Arab communities during the Prophet's lifetime, while the general audience encompasses all of humanity from the time of revelation until the Day of Judgment. Many members of this latter group — non-Arabs with diverse languages and cultures — often face challenges in fully understanding the meaning of the Qur'ān.

Translators of the Qur'ān have long sought to produce accurate renditions of its meanings. However, due to the text's unique linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural features, no translation can fully substitute for the original Arabic. As Islam spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula and attracted non-Arabic speakers, the need for translation became inevitable. Early translations often relied on a word-for-word approach, which frequently failed to convey the intended meanings effectively. While previous studies on Qur'ān translation have primarily concentrated on lexical choices and semantic equivalence, they have paid comparatively less attention to the situational context in which the verses were revealed. Although some research has examined aspects of Qur'ānic discourse, the role of explicitation in enhancing translation quality remains underexplored. This study addresses that gap by investigating how the explicitation of situational context—particularly through the inclusion of *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* (occasions of revelation)—affects the quality and comprehensibility of English translations of the Qur'ān. By analyzing four Shia translations through the lens of Klaudy's explicitation typology, this research offers new insights into the role of pragmatic explicitation in making the Qur'ān more accessible to non-Arabic-speaking audiences. The findings contribute to translation quality assessment frameworks and offer practical guidance for future Qur'ān translators.

This study offers valuable insights for translators seeking a more accurate understanding of Qur'ānic meanings by highlighting the importance of explicating situational context in translation. By addressing this aspect, the study helps to dispel ambiguity and bridge the informational gap often caused by word-for-word translation methods, thereby facilitating better comprehension for non-Arabic readers. An additional contribution of this research is its emphasis on raising translators' awareness of potential errors and misunderstandings that may arise from neglecting contextual factors. More significantly, the study engages with translation quality assessment (TQA) theories within the field of Qur'ān translation, offering a foundation for future research aimed at developing a comprehensive model for evaluating translation quality. The application of a TQA model in this study serves as a guide for other assessors, encouraging the use of objective theoretical frameworks rather than relying on subjective opinions when evaluating translated texts. Ultimately, this research aims to conduct a thorough analysis of how situational context explicitation can enhance the quality of English translations of the Qur'ān, grounded in established translation assessment theories.

## 2. Review of the literature

### 2.1. *The notion of equivalence*

Equivalence is considered a central concept in translation theory. However, translation scholars have yet to reach a unified, clear, and universally accepted definition of this notion within Translation Studies. As Catford (1965, p. 21) stated, “the basic problem of the translation process is to find equivalents, and the important task of translation theory is defining the nature and conditions to reach the equivalence in translation”.

Since the mid-twentieth century, the concept of equivalence has been a central concern in the work of many translation theorists. Among the prominent scholars who have explored this notion are Nida, Catford, Vinay and Darbelnet, House, Baker, and others. Roman Jakobson is often credited as the first theorist to introduce the term equivalence in a translation context, in his 1959 work. Scholars commonly use the term to distinguish between literal and free translation. Various perspectives have emerged regarding the complex nature of translation. Some scholars view it primarily as a linguistic process, where concepts in one language are directly rendered into another. This view aligns equivalence with literal translation of words and concepts. In contrast, other theorists emphasize the importance of cultural context, arguing that effective translation must convey the intended meaning rather than just the words. From this perspective, equivalence is about meaning rather than form. Furthermore, some specialists caution against using the term equivalence altogether, asserting that absolute equivalence is unattainable and that, at best, translation can only approximate the original meaning.

According to House (1997, p. 35), a translation should perform the same function in the target language as the source text does in the source language; thus, functional equivalence serves as the primary criterion for assessing translation quality. She also argued that covert translation—a type of translation that adapts the text naturally into the target culture—can help achieve functional equivalence. House emphasized that equivalence should not be confused with absolute sameness, asserting that full equivalence is unattainable. Instead, she proposed the notion of relative equivalence, which is influenced by various factors such as lexical, structural, and macro-linguistic differences between languages. Similarly, Newmark (1991) contended that ideal or perfect equivalence is an illusion, viewing translation equivalence as, at best, an approximation. Other scholars, such as Abdul-Raof (2001), have echoed this sentiment, stating that absolute equivalence at the lexical or textual level is improbable, and the pursuit of such equivalence is ultimately a mirage. Despite ongoing debates and theoretical challenges surrounding the concept of equivalence, translators often encounter instances of non-equivalence, or even untranslatability, particularly in complex areas such as syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features across languages. This issue becomes especially pronounced in the translation of the Qur’ān, where the sacred and multifaceted nature of the text adds further complexity to the quest for equivalence.

### 2.2. *Qur’ān translation quality assessment*

In spite of advancements in the field of TQA and translation theories, there is still no specific, inclusive, and clear theory for evaluating the quality of Qur’ān translations. Most translation theories are not applicable or effective in the case of the Qur’ān, as the Holy Qur’ān is not comparable to other sacred texts. In Bible translation, communicative and dynamic approaches can be effectively applied, since the Bible is considered the Bible in any language—the primary goal being to convey the meaning. However, in the case of

Qur'ān translation, conveying meaning is crucial, but preserving the form is equally important.

Some scholars insist on the non-translatability of the Qur'ān, yet this raises the question: how can the meaning be conveyed without translation? In response to this challenge, translators have employed various methods to render the meaning of the Qur'ān. Some have adopted a literal approach, aiming to reflect the equivalence of the original Arabic source text, while others have preferred to paraphrase the verses to ensure a clearer understanding and more accurate conveyance of meaning—resulting in freer translations. But how can the quality of these translations be assessed, especially when no translator of the Qur'ān has claimed to provide a fully accurate translation? And what criteria should be used to evaluate Qur'ān translations? To date, these translations have not been comprehensively evaluated within a consistent theoretical framework. The unit of assessment is often limited to a verse, phrase, expression, or even a single word. In such cases, translation theories may be applicable.

Among the works in this area, one can refer to *Evaluating English Qur'ān Translation* by Sajadi and Manafi Anari (2008), which assesses the quality of rendering material and mental verbs in several English translations of the Qur'ān. Although the study discusses various approaches to TQA, it is not clear which specific theory is actually employed. Another relevant study is *Assessing the Translation Quality of Qur'ānic Lexical Synonymy* by Al-Ghazali (2015), which is based on an equivalence-based model of TQA. In this research, the unit of evaluation is lexical items, and the applied method focuses on establishing equivalence.

A valuable contribution in this field is *Situational Context and Its Function in Qur'ān Translations* by Motaveri and Masudi Sadr (2016), which draws on Halliday's theory of register and situational context. The authors illustrate their approach through practical examples within the Qur'ānic context. They also address *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* as a component of the situational context and incorporate the viewpoints of Qur'ānic scholars regarding its significance for both translation quality and accurate interpretation. However, this study primarily explores cultural factors and their role in translation quality from the perspective of situational context, rather than treating *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* as its main focus.

### *2.3. Context of situation*

One of the key terms in this study is context of situation. This concept has been examined by various linguists from different perspectives, primarily within the fields of pragmatics and systemic functional linguistics. Halliday's approach to this concept is particularly useful in Translation Studies. Within his framework, context is classified into three categories: context of culture, context of situation, and co-text (Halliday, 1999, as cited in Hu, 2010). The first two categories encompass aspects outside the language, while co-text, also referred to as linguistic context, pertains to elements within the language itself (Hu, 2010).

Context is shaped by language choices, creating an interdependent relationship between the two (Hu, 2010). Language, through its lexical items and grammatical structures, is closely tied to cultural context, while a specific text and its components are connected to situational context. In this framework, cultural context corresponds to genre, situational context to register, and co-text to discourse. Situational context consists of three elements: field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to what is happening—the nature of the social action taking place. Tenor relates to the participants involved, including their status and social roles

within the interaction. Mode concerns the role of language itself and the participants' expectations regarding how language is used in a given situation. These three dimensions together define what is known as register (Hu, 2010).

In translation, analyzing the linguistic features of a text allows us to identify its register, and consequently, its situational context. Once the situational context is established, appropriate words and expressions can be selected to produce the target text, thereby reestablishing a corresponding situational context in the translation. Equivalence is not limited to a single aspect of meaning; rather, achieving equivalence involves recreating the situational context of the source text in the target language. Since languages differ to varying degrees, some loss is inevitable in the process of translation. Therefore, translators must carefully consider register variables and avoid making arbitrary or subjective choices. The concept of register brings new insight to the ongoing debate over translation approaches. It provides translators with a systematic framework that can guide their decisions and serve as a method for producing more contextually faithful translations.

#### *2.4. Explicitation*

Vinay and Darbelnet first introduced the concept of explicitation in 1958, describing it as “a process of introducing into the target language information that is only implicit in the source text but can be inferred from context or situation” (Pym, 2005). The concept was later developed by Blum-Kulka in 1986 and became known as the Explicitation Hypothesis, which focuses on the use of cohesion markers. The redundancy that arises from the translator's interpretation of the source text—resulting in a more explicit and redundant target text—is attributed to an increase in cohesive explicitness in the translated version. This phenomenon, where translations tend to be more explicit than their source texts, is what the Explicitation Hypothesis seeks to explain (Pym, 2001).

Explicitation is often considered inherent to the process of translation, and attention must be paid to the linguistic quality of both the source and target texts. However, Pym (2005) criticizes Blum-Kulka's Explicitation Hypothesis, arguing that it is based primarily on statistical analysis of textual occurrences rather than on cognitive processes of interpretation. In other words, cohesive explicitness does not account for all aspects of language use—particularly those that extend beyond the text itself, such as cultural references and context-dependent meanings (Pym, 2005).

According to Klaudy (2003, as cited in Pym, 2005), explicitation occurs when a source language unit with a general meaning is replaced by a target language unit with a more specific meaning. In other words, the complex meaning of a single word in the source language may be rendered as multiple words in the target language. As a result, the target text may introduce new meaningful elements, and a single sentence in the source text may be expanded into two or more sentences in the translation. Explicitation can also occur when phrases in the source language are expanded or elevated into full clauses in the target language. This process may be carried out through choices that are either conscious or automatic, and either obligatory or optional.

Klaudy's formulation of explicitation is highly praised by Pym (2005) for its comprehensive scope, as it allows for the observation of explicitation across multiple linguistic levels and its applicability to a wide range of language pairs. However, Pym (2005) also introduces his own model of explicitation, aiming to offer a more rational explanation for the occurrence of this phenomenon. He introduces the concept of risk in the translation

process, framing explicitation as a strategy to manage potential undesirable outcomes. Pym (2005) argues that the presence of multiple translation alternatives for a given sentence influences subsequent choices in the text and determines the degree of risk, whether low-risk or high-risk. He illustrates how translators may move from implicit to explicit information to reduce ambiguity, often by inserting specific interpretive elements into the target text. According to Pym (2005), explicitation may coexist with other so-called translation universals, such as normalization and simplification, even if these processes sometimes appear to contradict one another. Their coexistence reflects the complexity and variability inherent in the act of translation.

In her concept of partial explicitation, Blum-Kulka (2001) distinguishes between reader-based explicitation and text-based explicitation. In the former, the translator anticipates potential misunderstandings or interpretive challenges in the target language and applies appropriate strategies to minimize these risks. In the latter, the translator addresses issues by closely analyzing and clarifying the source text itself, selecting suitable treatments to manage these challenges (Blum-Kulka, 2005).

In his book, Becher (2011) reviews various approaches to explicitation, critiques some scholars' views on its use, and proposes his own perspective. He argues that the most effective way to investigate explicitation is through examining lexico-grammatical and pragmatic differences between the source and target languages to identify where explicitation is likely to occur. Becher emphasizes the importance of a contrastive linguistic approach in studying explicitation, drawing on the work of translation scholars Julian House (1991) and Doherty (2001). While House focuses on pragmatic differences, Doherty highlights syntactic differences between languages. Becher underscores that adopting a contrastive linguistic perspective is essential for describing and explaining occurrences of explicitation (House, 1991; Doherty, 2001, as cited in Becher, 2011).

Becher (2011) considers Vinay and Darbelnet's definition of explicitation somewhat vague and believes it leaves certain questions unanswered. To clarify, he initially defines explicitness as "the verbalization of information that the addressee might be able to infer if it is not verbalized" (p. 17). Building on this, he proposes his own definition of explicitation as occurring when a target text is more explicit than its corresponding source text (Becher, 2011). However, he acknowledges that this is primarily a product-based definition and does not explain how the degree of explicitness in the target text relates to the translation process. Contrary to Becher's critique, he also questions the validity of Blum-Kulka's studies on the Explicitation Hypothesis.

Although Becher criticized many studies supporting Blum-Kulka's hypothesis for methodological weaknesses and called for a more nuanced approach to explicitation, he was unable to propose a fully comprehensive definition of the concept (Murtisari, 2014). In his article (2010a), Becher described Blum-Kulka's hypothesis as vaguely formulated and insufficiently precise, arguing that explicitation may occur due to factors such as simplification or normalization—not solely as a result of the translator's interpretive process applied to the source text (Murtisari, 2014).

In Klaudy's typologies of explicitation shifts, she distinguishes between obligatory and optional, pragmatic and translation inherent explicitation (2008, p. 107):

- Obligatory explicitation is the result of lexico-grammatical differences between the source and the target language.



- Optional explicitation caused by differences in stylistic options preferences between the source and target language.
- Pragmatic explicitation comes from differences in cultural and universal knowledge shared among the source and target language members.
- Translation-inherent explicitation is motivated by “the name of translation process itself

Types 1 to 3 are caused or motivated between the source and target language, these types are predictable and have to be existed. It is obvious that there exist lexico-grammatical, stylistic and cultural differences among every possible language pairs. While translation-inherent explicitation is not predictable and in fact is postulated to be exist (Becher, 2011).

It is also worth mentioning that implicitation contrasts with explicitation. According to Klaudy (2005, p. 15), implicitation occurs when a source text unit with a specific meaning is replaced by a target text unit with a more general meaning. In fact, blending several source language words into a single target language word can serve as an example of implicitation.

One of the main objectives of this study is to draw translators’ attention to the critical role of exegesis in Qur’ān translation. Specifically, it will examine the importance of using authentic historical and exegetical references to accurately determine the occasions of revelation, which ultimately leads to a proper understanding of the meaning. The study also aims to identify translators’ slips and errors in rendering verses related to these occasions, thereby highlighting the significance of extratextual elements in the translation process. This investigation will serve as a testing ground for applying translation quality assessment theories to Qur’ān translation and will evaluate how effectively these theories can be employed when dealing with a sacred text.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research design and corpus

Since this study is primarily descriptive and based on library research, a brief explanation of this methodology is warranted. Descriptive research aims to systematically describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon under investigation. Given that this study focuses on English translations of the Qur’ān, four English translations were selected from the available versions to form the corpus. Certain criteria guided this selection process, which will be detailed below. The chosen translations are *Study of the Qur’ān* by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Qur’ān* by Tahereh Saffarzadeh, *The Holy Qur’ān* by Mohammad Ali Habib Shakir, and *The Qur’ān* by Seyyed Mir Ahmed Ali. Therefore, the study focuses on four Shia translations: Nasr, Shakir, Saffarzadeh, and Mir. The corpus consists of 100 verses randomly selected from *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* sources (Mohaqiq, 1971) to ensure the presence of situational context. These verses were analyzed to determine the extent and type of explicitation applied by each translator.

The criteria and factors considered in selecting these four versions among all available English translations are as follows. First, these translations are from among popular and well-known translations. Their frequent publishing acknowledges this matter. Second, they have been selected among the latest and recent versions and include both commentary translation and non-commentary types. Finally, the last criterion but the most important one

is that they have been chosen among Shia translation of the Holy Qur'ān. Due to analyzing situational context in this study, regardless the ideological presuppositions, the research required to follow a united and unanimous, interpretation based on authentic exegetical sources. Since there is often some diversity of opinions between Shia and Sunni scholars in different subject matters and finding common accounts was too difficult, it was determined to select one of the branches of Islam as the basis of analysis. According to the mentioned reason, the researcher has used Shia references because of their accessibility.

### 3.2. Data analysis

This section outlines the methodological approach employed in analyzing explicitation of the situational context in selected Qur'ān translations.

The first step involved selecting four English translations of the Qur'ān based on specific criteria previously mentioned. Next, the focus shifted to identifying and selecting verses that include occasions of revelation. Several factors guided this selection, including the number of verses, the method of selection, and the use of an exegetical source to serve as a foundation for reports on occasions of revelation.

After reviewing various references, two well-known and authentic Shia sources were chosen. The first, *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, compiled by Muhammad Hojati (1992), presents interpretations from both Shia and Sunni perspectives. However, due to its limited coverage of verses, a second source was also selected: *Nemuneh Bayanat Dar Sha'ne Nuzule Ay'at*, compiled by Mohaqeq (1971). This collection is based on Sheikh Tousi's *Tafsir* and systematically lists all verses assumed to have an occasion of revelation, organized by the chapters of the Qur'ān. Sheikh Tousi's commentary work, *Tebyan*, identifies 436 such verses. From these, 100 verses—also included in Mohaqeq's compilation—were randomly selected for analysis. This source further references additional exegetical works, enhancing the depth of the analysis.

In the final step, each selected verse, alongside its occasion of revelation and its four English translations, was analyzed and discussed to address the research questions. This analysis was conducted through the lens of relevant translation theories, with comparisons drawn in relation to the study's primary objectives.

The analytical framework for investigating and categorizing cases of explicitation was based on Kinga Klaudy's typology of explicitation (2008), as noted earlier. Since translation-inherent explicitation is not applicable to Qur'ān translation, this study focused on the remaining three types:

- Obligatory explicitation, arising from structural differences between Arabic and English.
- Optional explicitation, resulting from stylistic preferences in translation.
- Pragmatic explicitation, derived from cultural and contextual clarifications added by the translator.

Each translation was assessed to identify occurrences of explicitation, and quantitative data were collected to compare their frequency.

The selected verses were analyzed in their original Arabic alongside their four English translations. Each instance of explicitation was coded according to the following criteria:

- Presence of explicitation (yes/no)
- type of explicitation (obligatory, optional, or pragmatic)
- position in the translation (within the text, footnote, or commentary)

The categorized data were then quantitatively analyzed to determine which type of explicitation was most prevalent across the translations.

## 5. Results and discussion

This section presents the findings of the study and discusses how explicitation of situational context has been applied in the selected Qur'ān translations. The results are first summarized in a quantitative analysis, followed by detailed examples to illustrate different types of explicitation observed in the translations.

### 5.1. Quantitative analysis

The frequency of explicitation types across the four translations was systematically analyzed, revealing notable differences in how each translator approached the process. Nasr's translation exhibited 20 cases of obligatory explicitation, 15 of optional explicitation, and 45 of pragmatic explicitation, totaling 80 instances. Shakir's translation showed the least use of explicitation, with 10 obligatory, 5 optional, and 20 pragmatic cases, amounting to 35 in total. Saffarzadeh's version contained 18 obligatory, 12 optional, and 40 pragmatic explicitation cases, summing to 70. Finally, Mir's translation demonstrated the highest frequency, with 22 obligatory, 17 optional, and 50 pragmatic explicitation instances, culminating in 89 cases overall. This distribution highlights the varying strategies translators employ regarding explicitation to clarify the Qur'ān's meaning. Therefore, pragmatic explicitation was the most frequent type, indicating that translators often added contextual clarifications to aid understanding. Among the four translators, Nasr and Mir employed explicitation more extensively, whereas Shakir used it the least, favoring a more literal translation approach. Optional explicitation appeared least frequently, suggesting that translators generally prioritized accuracy over stylistic modifications in their renderings.

### 5.2. Examples of explicitation in translations

The following examples demonstrate the application of explicitation in various Qur'ān translations:

Example 1: Surah Al-Baqarah (2:104)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا انظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُوا وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

*Context of Revelation:*

The term *Ra'ina* was originally used by Muslims as a respectful request for the Prophet's attention. However, opponents of Islam, particularly some Jewish groups, deliberately distorted its pronunciation to turn it into an insult. This verse instructs Muslims to use the

alternative term *Unzurna* (“look at us”) instead, thereby avoiding any potential misuse or offense.

The analysis of translations and explicitation reveals diverse approaches to the term *Ra’ina*. Naser translates it as, “Do not say, ‘Attend to us,’ but say, ‘Regard us,’ and listen!” This pragmatic explicitation replaces the original term with an English alternative, supplemented by commentary on its historical context. Shakir, however, uses direct transliteration, rendering the phrase as “Do not say: ‘Raena,’ but say: ‘Unzurna,’” without further explanation. Saffarzade employs pragmatic explicitation, translating as “Do not say: ‘Raena’ [to the Messenger], but say: ‘Unzurna,’” and includes a concise footnote clarifying *Ra’ina*’s meaning. Mir’s translation, “Say not: ‘Ra’ina,’ but say: ‘Unzorna,’” is paired with detailed commentary exploring phonetic variations and cultural implications, exemplifying robust pragmatic explicitation.

Example 2: Surah Ali ‘Imran (3:100)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ تُطِيعُوا قَرِيبًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ

*Context of Revelation:*

This verse addresses the attempts by Jewish leaders to sow discord among the Muslim community by manipulating two prominent Arab tribes, Aws and Khazraj. By invoking memories of past conflicts, these leaders sought to weaken the unity of Muslims and undermine their faith.

The translations and explicitation analysis of the verse demonstrate different translator approaches. Naser translates it as, “If you obey a group among those who were given the Book, they will render you disbelievers after you having believed,” accompanied by pragmatic explicitation with commentary clarifying that the verse refers to Jewish leaders inciting division. Shakir provides a more literal translation, “If you obey a party from among those who have been given the Book, they will turn you back as unbelievers after you have believed,” without adding any contextual explanation. Saffarzade’s translation, “if you follow a group those who were given the scripture, they would indeed turn you disbelievers, after you have believed,” also includes pragmatic explicitation, supported by a footnote explaining the role of Jewish leaders. Mir’s version, “If you obey a group among those who have been given the Book, they will turn you back into infidels after your believing,” similarly uses pragmatic explicitation and is supplemented by a detailed commentary describing the historical events related to the verse.

Example 3: Surah Al-Kawthar (108:3)

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ

*Context of Revelation:*

This verse serves as a response to the Prophet Muhammad’s adversaries, who insulted him by calling him *Abtar*—a term meaning “cut off,” implying that he would have no descendants or lasting legacy.

The translations and explicitation analysis reveal various interpretations of the phrase involving the term “Abtar.” Naser translates it as, “Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off,” accompanied by pragmatic explicitation, with a footnote explaining that “Abtar” was an insult used against the Prophet. Shakir offers an obligatory explicitation with the translation, “Surely your enemy is the one who shall be without posterity,” where “without posterity” serves as a direct English equivalent of “Abtar.” Saffarzade’s translation, “Indeed your enemy is truly cut off from any goodness,” employs pragmatic explicitation that broadens the meaning to imply a wider social loss. Lastly, Mir translates it as, “Verily he who hates thee shall be childless and cut off,” supported by pragmatic explicitation, with commentary explaining the insult and its cultural significance.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study examined the role of explicitation of situational context in the quality of English translations of the Qur’ān. By analyzing 100 selected verses from four Shia translations—Nasr, Shakir, Saffarzadeh, and Mir—the findings reveal that pragmatic explicitation was the most frequently employed type, especially in instances where cultural, historical, and contextual clarifications were essential for comprehension.

- Pragmatic explicitation predominated, particularly when historical or cultural context was necessary.
- Nasr and Mir’s translations were the most explicit, often supplemented by footnotes or commentaries.
- Shakir’s translation was the most literal, with minimal use of explicitation.

The study demonstrated that explicitation significantly enhances reader understanding, particularly for verses containing historical references.

Specifically, Nasr and Mir applied explicitation more extensively, providing detailed footnotes and commentaries to elucidate meaning. Shakir, in contrast, adhered closely to a literal translation style with limited explicitation, while Saffarzadeh employed a moderate approach, occasionally incorporating brief footnotes to aid comprehension. These results underscore the critical role of explicitation in conveying the deeper meanings of Qur’ānic verses to non-Arabic audiences, ensuring that important historical and cultural contexts are preserved in translation.

Furthermore, the study highlights limitations in current translation quality assessment models, such as Klaudy’s explicitation typology. Although Klaudy’s framework effectively categorizes different types of explicitation, it does not adequately address the historical, exegetical, and theological complexities intrinsic to sacred texts like the Qur’ān. Therefore, there is a clear need for an expanded model that explicitly incorporates religious and exegetical explicitation as distinct and essential categories in Qur’ānic translation.

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# The Role of Translation Movements in Developing Modern Islamic Civilization: Civilizational-Cultural Perspective in Focus

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## ABSTRACT

Throughout Islamic history, translation has served not merely as a linguistic bridge but as a civilizational instrument, shaping scientific, philosophical, and cultural trajectories. This study explores the role of three major translation movements, the Sassanid, Abbasid, and Qajar periods, in constructing and transmitting the knowledge foundational to the development of Islamic civilization. Grounded in the cultural turn framework of translation studies and informed by the theory of modern Islamic civilization as articulated by Imam Khamenei, the research identifies six core factors: the role of translators as cultural mediators, the strategic selection of texts, the establishment of translation institutions, resistance to overreliance on translation, and the influence of ideological and policy-driven support structures. A qualitative, descriptive-analytical method was employed, with data analyzed through thematic coding and comparative historical analysis. The findings suggest that revitalizing these key elements in the present context could enable the global dissemination of Islamic civilizational values, positioning translation as a strategic, future-oriented tool.

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## **1. Introduction**

The development of civilizations is deeply intertwined with processes of knowledge transmission and cultural exchange, in which translation has historically played a central and dynamic role—particularly as a catalyst for scientific advancement (Mir Khalid & Anjum, 2025). Rather than being seen solely as a linguistic activity, translation has been recognized by scholars such as Gutt (2010) and Bassnett and Lefevere (1990, 1998) as a form of intercultural communication. As Williams (2013) observed, translation performs varied functions across historical and sociopolitical contexts, underscoring its evolving influence on civilizational development. It has facilitated the assimilation, reinterpretation, and transformation of scientific and philosophical knowledge across cultural and ideological boundaries (Gutas, 1998; Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990). This is particularly evident during pivotal historical moments—most notably the Abbasid Caliphate—when translation became institutionalized and was integrated into the broader fabric of society (Frye, 2008; Rosenthal, 1975).

Contemporary translation theory increasingly views translation as a political and cultural act, rather than merely a linguistic process. This shift, emphasized in the “cultural turn” of translation studies, underscores the role of translators as agents of ideology and cultural mediation (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990, 1998; Venuti, 1995; Bedeker & Feinauer, 2006). Adopting this perspective, the present study examines how historical translation movements have functioned as instruments in the construction of Islamic civilization and explores their relevance to current efforts aimed at reviving what Imam Khamenei (2012) terms the “modern Islamic civilization”.

While extensive scholarship has addressed historical translation movements—particularly the Graeco-Arabic tradition (Gutas, 1998)—relatively little research has linked these historical episodes to contemporary civilizational agendas within the Islamic world. Moreover, the specific mechanisms by which translation can advance this vision, including the role of translators as cultural and ideological mediators, remain underexplored. This paper seeks to address this gap by analyzing how historical translation dynamics can be recontextualized to support the resurgence of civilizational thought in the 21st-century Muslim world, with a particular focus on Iran’s evolving civilizational discourse (see discourses by Imam Khamenei, 2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2019).

Accordingly, the research is structured around these five questions:

- What factors contributed to the success of Islamic translation movements?
- How can these factors be reapplied in modern contexts?
- What ideological and institutional frameworks are needed today?
- What challenges limit translation’s civilizational function?
- How can translation be a conduit between past heritage and future vision?

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Descriptive studies on Islamic translation history*

Pioneering works, such as Rosenthal (1975) and Gutas (1998, 2012) have extensively analyzed the institutionalization of translation during the Abbasid era. Gutas (1998) highlighted the Graeco-Arabic translation movement as a civilizational turning point, where scientific and philosophical knowledge was systematically adapted into the Islamic intellectual world. Similarly, Frye (2008) underscored the continuity between pre-Islamic Iranian knowledge systems and Islamic learning, pointing to the foundational role of the Sassanid Empire in shaping translation infrastructures. These studies, however, largely focus on the what and how of translation rather than its civilizational purpose.

## *2.2. The cultural role of translation and translators*

A more analytical layer is introduced by scholars, such as Bassnett and Lefevere (1990), Lefevere (1992b), and Venuti (1995), who argued that translation operates within ideological and cultural systems. According to this view, translators function as “rewriters” who shape cultural narratives and mediate between systems of power (Lefevere, 1992a). This perspective is echoed by Asghari (2011), who studied Iranian translators’ strategic role in cultural transmission between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AH, and Behzadi (2015), who investigated narrative shifts in the Qajar-era translations as ideological reflections of Iran’s modernization processes. These works situate translators as active agents rather than passive intermediaries.

## *2.3. Translation and civilization building*

Although the political and cultural importance of translation is widely acknowledged, few scholars have explicitly explored its role as a strategic tool for civilizational renewal. Bsoul (2019) examines translation and acculturation in the medieval Islamic world, arguing that translation enabled epistemic integration and growth. Similarly, Bahri (2011) views translation as a mechanism for preserving cultural identity during periods of political instability. However, these studies do not fully connect translation to a deliberate civilizational strategy, particularly in the modern Islamic context as articulated by thinkers like Imam Khamenei (2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2019).

## *2.4. Contextual studies of specific periods*

The Abbasid translation movement has been most widely studied (Fani, 1981; Gutas, 1998; Jan Ahmadi, 2000; Jamili, 2001; Bsoul, 2019), followed by works focusing on Sassanid precursors (Frye, 1984; Zarrinkoob, 2008) and the Qajar-era’s engagement with Western knowledge (Parsa-Kia, 2009; Bahri, 2011; Behzadi, 2015). Jamshidi Sarai (2016) explored the formation of translation movements in relation to socio-political demands, while Roosta-Azad (2016) provided a comparative view of Persian and Greek translation processes. These studies provide rich data but often lack a unified analytical framework.

Despite existing scholarship, several gaps remain. First, there is a lack of comparative analysis across historical translation movements to identify shared structural or ideological patterns. Second, the connection between historical translation strategies and contemporary Islamic civilizational thought is underexplored. Finally, few studies apply modern translation theories, particularly the cultural turn, to analyze historical movements within their ideological contexts. This study seeks to address these gaps by integrating historical, cultural, and theoretical perspectives. It uniquely applies the cultural turn theory (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990, 1998) and incorporates Islamic civilizational discourse to compare three major translation movements—Sassanid, Abbasid, and Qajar. Additionally, it aims to derive

practical insights for a contemporary Islamic translation agenda aligned with the epistemological vision of modern Islamic civilization.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Research design*

This study utilized a qualitative, descriptive-analytical research design to examine the civilizational role of translation movements in Islamic history. A qualitative approach was chosen for its suitability in interpreting the cultural, ideological, and institutional dimensions of the subject, which are not easily quantified. This design facilitates a critical exploration of translation as a socio-civilizational process within historical and ideological contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The descriptive-analytical model aligns with the research objective: to identify structural similarities and ideological patterns across the Sassanid, Abbasid, and Qajar translation movements and assess their relevance to the goals of modern Islamic civilization. The analysis integrated primary historical texts and secondary academic sources to uncover recurring themes, strategic practices, and institutional mechanisms.

#### *3.2. Corpus*

The corpus consisted of archival texts, historical records, and scholarly analyses related to three periods of translation movements:

- **Sassanid Era:** Focusing on Zoroastrian and Indian scientific texts translated into Middle Persian (Frye, 1984; Gutas, 2012; Zarrinkoob, 2008).
- **Abbasid Caliphate:** Emphasizing the Graeco-Arabic translation movement, with institutional support, such as Bayt al-Hikmah (Gutas, 1998; Rosenthal, 1975).
- **Qajar Period:** Engaged with European texts and modern sciences, often through French and Russian mediation (Behzadi, 2015; Parsa-Kia, 2009).

Sources were selected using purposive sampling to identify texts that illuminate the civilizational roles of translation, such as cultural identity formation, scientific dissemination, and ideological negotiation in Islamic translation movements. The inclusion criteria required texts to demonstrate relevance to these movements, evidence of institutional or state involvement, discussion of translator agency and ideology, and temporal coverage from the 3rd century CE to the early 20th century.

#### *3.3. Data analysis*

Thematic analysis was employed following the approach of Braun and Clarke (2006), allowing for the systematic identification, classification, and interpretation of the key themes. The process involved four key stages:

- **Initial coding:** The texts were read and annotated for relevant concepts, such as “translator as mediator,” “institutional patronage,” or “strategic selection.”
- **Axial coding:** The codes were grouped into broader categories under the cultural turn framework, such as “ideological recontextualization” or “civilizational transmission.”

- Thematic clustering: The emerging patterns were consolidated into six thematic factors that defined successful translation movements across all the three historical periods.
- Comparative analysis: The three periods were compared using historical-comparative methodology (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003), assessing continuity and divergence in translation strategies and institutional support.

### *3.4. Validity and reflexivity*

To ensure validity, triangulation was applied by cross-referencing multiple sources from both Islamic and Western historiographies. The study also acknowledged researcher subjectivity and applied reflexivity in interpreting ideological dimensions, particularly in relation to contemporary civilizational discourses, such as those of Imam Khamenei (2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2019). The analytical categories were not imposed a priori but emerged from the iterative reading of the data, enhancing conceptual robustness and grounding theory in historical evidence. Furthermore, frequent back-checking with existing theoretical literature ensured construct validity (Yin, 2018).

### *3.5. Theoretical model*

This study applies the cultural turn in translation theory, as developed by Bassnett and Lefevere (1990, 1998) to frame translation as an ideological and cultural act. Rather than treating translation as a neutral linguistic transfer, this approach considers the broader political, historical, and civilizational implications of translation practices. Translators are seen as active agents embedded in networks of cultural power, capable of shaping discourse and influencing civilizational trajectories (Lefevere, 1992a, 1992b; Venuti, 1995).

In parallel, the study drew on the civilizational discourse of Imam Khamenei, who has been framing Islamic civilization as a multi-dimensional system, encompassing science, ethics, governance, and identity (Imam Khamenei, 2019). In this discourse, translation is viewed as a mechanism for epistemic revival and the reclamation of Islamic intellectual sovereignty. Thus, translation becomes a future-oriented practice that enables the assimilation of external knowledge within indigenous Islamic frameworks. Combining these perspectives, the theoretical framework allowed for a nuanced understanding of translation as:

- A mechanism of cultural mediation and ideological negotiation (Bedeker & Feinauer, 2006, Lefevere, 1992b),
- A civilizational strategy for intellectual resistance and renewal (Venuti, 1995; Baker, 2009),
- A policy-dependent and institutionally driven endeavor (Hatim & Mason, 1990; Gutas, 1998, 2012; Baker & Saldanha, 2020).

This dual theoretical lens enabled a historical-comparative and forward-looking analysis of translation movements, linking their past successes to potential futures.

## **4. Results**

### *4.1. The Sassanid era (224-651 AD)*

The first significant translation movement in Iran emerged during the Sassanid era, notably with the founding of the Jundishapur Academy—a prominent center for medical and scientific studies (Roosta-Azad, 2016). During this time, scholarly efforts led to the systematic translation of texts from Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Syriac into Persian, contributing substantially to advancements in medicine, astronomy, philosophy, and mathematics (Behzadi, 2015). This intellectual legacy profoundly influenced later scholarly pursuits, particularly during the Abbasid period, when Persian scholars played a pivotal role in expanding translation activities and disseminating knowledge (Bahri, 2011). The Sassanid dedication to intellectual and cultural exchange underscores the transformative power of translation in shaping civilizations, marking this era as a foundational chapter in the history of translation in Iran and the broader region (Bahri, 2011).

### *4.2. The Abbasid caliphate (750-1258 AD)*

The second major translation movement flourished between the 2nd and 6th centuries AH, during the Abbasid Caliphate, most notably with the establishment of Bayt al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad. This institution became a center for translating classical works from Greek, Indian, and Persian scholars into Arabic (Fani, 1981; Roosta-Azad, 2016). In the early Abbasid period, non-Muslim intellectuals—Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jews—drew upon their rich cultural heritages to lead translation efforts that transferred scientific and philosophical knowledge from Greek, Persian, Indian, Syriac, and Nabataean sources into Arabic (Zarrinkoob, 2008). The movement reached its peak under Caliph al-Ma'mun, initially focusing on scientific and medical texts before expanding to encompass natural sciences, philosophy, and religious studies. These efforts were carried out by distinguished translators from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, including Iranian, Greek, Indian, Syriac, and Arab scholars. This intellectual renaissance marked the height of the Islamic Golden Age (Jamili, 2001; Behzadi, 2015). Among the most impactful translation movements in history, the Abbasid initiative centered in Baghdad played a vital role in the development and global dissemination of Islamic culture and civilization (Parsa-Kia, 2009).

### *4.3. The Qajar era (18th-19th centuries AD)*

The third major translation movement in Iran emerged during the Qajar era and is often referred to as the Modernization Movement. This period was marked by significant transformations across Iran's literary, social, political, ideological, and cultural spheres (Behzadi, 2015). Translation served as a critical tool for introducing Western science, literature, and political thought into Iranian society. Each translation initiative during this era was shaped by its institutional context, the agency of translators, ideological frameworks, and its broader contribution to the evolution of Islamic civilization. The goal extended beyond mere descriptive comparison; rather, it aimed to derive actionable insights to revitalize translation as a strategic civilizational instrument in the contemporary Islamic world.

#### 4.4. Factor analysis

##### 4.4.1. Factor 1: Translators as cultural mediators

Translators across all three historical periods functioned not merely as linguistic intermediaries, but as intercultural negotiators who actively shaped the ideological framing of imported knowledge. In the Sassanid era, figures such as Borzuya (Burzoy) adapted Indian philosophical and medical texts—most notably the Panchatantra—into the Persian intellectual tradition, aligning them with Zoroastrian ethical cosmology (Frye, 1984; Gutas, 2012). These translations often entailed significant reinterpretation to fit the spiritual and epistemological paradigms of pre-Islamic Iran. During the Abbasid Golden Age, this mediatory role became even more pronounced. Scholars like Hunayn ibn Ishaq and his associates were not only multilingual—fluent in Syriac, Greek, and Arabic—but also well-versed in Islamic theology and contemporary rhetorical conventions. Their translations of Galen, Aristotle, and Plato were ideologically nuanced, tailored to harmonize with the Islamic worldview rather than serving as direct textual reproductions (Gutas, 1998; Rosenthal, 1975). By contrast, the Qajar period saw a disruption in this tradition of cultural mediation. Translators such as Mirza Malkom Khan and Mirza Fatali Akhundov endeavored to introduce Enlightenment thought and European political philosophy into Iran but lacked a coherent cultural or ideological framework to contextualize these ideas. This disconnect often resulted in cognitive dissonance between Islamic traditionalism and imported modernity, generating conflict rather than intellectual synthesis (Parsa-Kia, 2009; Behzadi, 2015).

##### 4.4.2. Factor 2: Strategic selection of translated works

Translation during the Sassanid period was highly selective, focusing on texts of practical and religious significance—such as treatises on medicine, ethics, and astrology. These choices mirrored the strategic priorities of the Sassanid state: promoting health, moral conduct, and effective governance (Zarrinkoob, 2008). By contrast, the Abbasid era introduced a more systematic and ideologically driven approach to content selection. With the establishment of *Bayt al-Hikmah*, translation priorities became institutionalized. Philosophical, scientific, and mathematical works—particularly those compatible with rationalist thought—were translated to support and enrich Islamic theological and scientific discourse (Fani, 1981; Gutas, 1998). In this context, translation functioned not merely as a conduit of knowledge, but as a deliberate instrument of epistemic sovereignty. During the Qajar period, however, content selection became largely reactive, shaped by the immediate imperatives of military modernization and bureaucratic reform. Although important texts in technology and political science were translated, the absence of a cohesive civilizational vision resulted in a fragmented and ideologically incoherent translation agenda (Bahri, 2011; Behzadi, 2015).

##### 4.4.3. Factor 3: Establishment of translation institutions

The institutionalization of translation was central to its role as a civilizational force. The Sassanid Academy at Jundishapur served as an early prototype for cross-cultural knowledge transfer, integrating Indian, Greek, and Persian intellectual traditions under royal patronage (Frye, 1984; Najafpour, Giti-Pasand, & Khosropanah, 2011). Though more limited in scale, it introduced an interdisciplinary ethos that would later flourish under Islamic rule. In contrast, the Abbasid era represented the full institutional maturation of translation efforts. *Bayt al-Hikmah* (House of Wisdom), established under Caliph al-Ma'mun, functioned as a

state-sponsored center for translation and scientific inquiry (Jamshidi-Sarai, 2016). It offered structured support through salaries, scholarly supervision, and ideological oversight, effectively embedding translation within the machinery of state policy and making it a cornerstone of the Islamic intellectual project (Rosenthal, 1975; Fani, 1981; Gutas, 1998).

During the Qajar translation movement, the first military translation institute was established in Tabriz (Hashemi & Heydarpour, 2013), and the Dar al-Fonun translation center flourished under the patronage of Nasir al-Din Shah. However, unlike the more cohesive and ideologically grounded institutions of the Sassanid and Abbasid periods, Qajar-era translation efforts lacked an overarching civilizational vision. They failed to integrate translation into a broader ideological or religious framework, resulting in a fragmented and utilitarian approach (Parsa-Kia, 2009). Consequently, these translation centers remained decentralized, limited in institutional capacity, and largely disconnected from the traditional Islamic intellectual tradition.

#### 4.4.4. Factor 4: Resistance to overreliance on translation

A critical barrier to indigenous knowledge production in non-Western academic settings is the overreliance on translation or translation dependency—the unfiltered importation of foreign texts without contextual or ideological adaptation. This practice can lead to epistemic fragmentation, intellectual eclecticism, and even cultural self-destruction (Abdi Chari, Barazash, & Abdi Saghavaz, 2024). This concern is not new. Imam Khamenei (2006, 2008, 2013, as cited in Zeynaldini & Ghanaghi, 2022) has repeatedly emphasized that intellectual dependency, mere imitation, and a spirit of translationism hinder the development of genuine knowledge production in universities.

Historically, effective resistance to such dependency can be observed in the Sassanid and the Abbasid translation movements, which exercised critical selectivity—translating only those works that could be meaningfully integrated into their epistemic and cultural frameworks (Gutas, 1998; Zarrinkoob, 2008). This strategic approach helped preserve cultural coherence and avoid epistemological confusion. Conversely, during the Qajar period, translation practices lacked such discernment. Initiated by Abbas Mirza, with the noble aim of scientific progress, the movement gradually evolved into an uncontrolled influx of Western texts—ranging from romance novels to political treatises—many of which were ill-suited to the socio-cultural landscape of Iran (Behzadi, 2015; Abdi Chari et al., 2024). Without adequate ideological filtering, the Qajar translation movement contributed more to fragmentation than to civilizational advancement. This contrast underscores the importance of resisting passive translationism and cultivating indigenous knowledge systems that integrate external ideas critically and constructively, rather than wholesale.

#### 4.4.5. Factor 5: Institutional patronage and policy-making

State patronage played a decisive role in the success of translation movements during both the Sassanid and Abbasid periods. In the Sassanid era, translation was closely tied to statecraft and religious education, with rulers actively endorsing the translation of scientific and religious texts—particularly from Sanskrit and Greek—as a means of consolidating imperial knowledge and reinforcing Zoroastrian doctrine (Gutas, 2012; Rosenthal, 1975). Similarly, during the Abbasid period, Caliph al-Ma'mun institutionalized translation as a cornerstone of intellectual and civilizational advancement, most notably through the establishment of Bayt al-Hikmah. Under his leadership, the state provided generous financial incentives and formal recognition for scholars, cultivating a vibrant environment

for scholarly production and intercultural exchange (Frye, 2008; Baker & Saldanha, 2020). In both cases, the strategic alignment of translation with state interests was key to its institutional sustainability and cultural impact.

During the Qajar period, state support for translation was inconsistent. Although rulers like Nasir al-Din Shah initiated reforms and supported institutions such as Dar al-Fonun, translation efforts often lacked ideological grounding and long-term planning. More frequently, translation was treated as a symbol of modernization rather than a tool for structural reform (Khodaparast, 2019). In contrast, effective policy-making played a significant role in shaping the translation movement during the Abbasid and Sassanid periods. The Abbasid rulers, in particular, implemented structured policies to promote the translation and study of foreign texts, ensuring that these efforts aligned with the broader intellectual and scientific goals of the empire (Munday, 2016).

Translation policies extended beyond the mere selection of texts; they also encompassed control over their dissemination. Political and ideological motivations shaped which works were prioritized, reflecting the Abbasid rulers' efforts to integrate diverse bodies of knowledge into a cohesive intellectual framework (Parsa-Kia, 2009). Similarly, the Sassanid Empire adopted a state-centric approach to translation, with texts rendered into Middle Persian under royal patronage for purposes of religious consolidation—particularly the promotion of Zoroastrian doctrine—and bureaucratic administration. In this context, translation served both ideological unification and administrative rationalization (Daryae, 2009). In contrast, translation policies during the Qajar period were sporadic and lacked ideological or institutional continuity. While initiatives such as the establishment of Dar al-Fonun signaled attempts at modernization, they were largely reactive and not part of a coherent intellectual agenda. Translation efforts often relied on individual patronage and were driven by political mimicry of Europe rather than a strategic cultural vision (Amanat, 1997; Khodaparast, 2019).

#### 4.4.6. Factor 6: Ideological integration and reframing

Perhaps the most significant distinction among the three translation movements lies in their approach to ideological reframing. A defining feature of Abbasid translation efforts was the selective adaptation of Greek rationalism, which was not adopted wholesale but reinterpreted to align with Islamic theology, particularly in the realms of kalam and philosophy (Gutas, 1998; Bsoul, 2019). Similarly, the Sassanids filtered Indian and Hellenistic ideas through the lens of Zoroastrian metaphysics, preserving cultural continuity and reinforcing religious orthodoxy (Frye, 1984). In contrast, the Qajar period lacked such ideological mediation. Western concepts were introduced with minimal filtering, resulting in an intellectual dissonance between traditional religious structures and the influx of foreign knowledge (Parsa-Kia, 2009; Bahri, 2011).

#### 4.5. *Synthesis and interpretation*

When these six factors are viewed comparatively, a pattern emerges.



Table 1. Comparative assessment of translation movement foundations across historical periods.

Factor	Sassanid	Abbasid	Qajar
cultural mediation	strong	strong	moderate
strategic selection	moderate–high	very high	low
institutionalization	moderate	very high	low–moderate
controlled translation	high	high	low
patronage & policy	moderate–strong	strong	inconsistent
ideological reframing	high	very high	weak

Table 1 offers a comparative evaluation of six foundational factors that shaped the translation movements across three pivotal historical periods: the Sassanid, Abbasid, and Qajar eras. The selected factors—Cultural Mediation, Strategic Selection, Institutionalization, Controlled Translation, Patronage and Policy, and Ideological Reframing—are assessed in terms of their relative strength and presence within each period. The ratings (e.g., High, Moderate, Low) represent qualitative judgments based on historical records and scholarly interpretations. This comparison highlights both patterns of continuity and points of divergence. The Abbasid model emerges as the most comprehensive, demonstrating how translation, when embedded within a coherent ideological, institutional, and civilizational framework, can serve as a transformative force. The Sassanid period laid important epistemic groundwork, whereas the Qajar era exemplifies the limitations of translation efforts in the absence of ideological integration and strategic direction. These results support and pave the ground for the proposition that translation can once again serve as a civilizational engine—provided that modern efforts mirror the integration, selectivity, and ideological clarity of the previous movements.

## 5. Discussion and implications

Based on a comparative thematic analysis, this study identifies six interrelated factors that significantly contributed to the effectiveness of historical Islamic translation movements (Bedeker & Feinauer, 2006). Translators across the Sassanid, Abbasid, and Qajar periods did not function merely as linguistic intermediaries; rather, they engaged in active ideological and cultural reframing, adapting texts to align with prevailing epistemologies. The most successful movements—most notably during the Abbasid era—exhibited a deliberate approach to content selection, prioritizing works that advanced broader civilizational objectives over indiscriminate adoption of foreign materials. Centralized institutions, such as the House of Wisdom in the Abbasid period and Jundishapur in the Sassanid era, played a crucial role in facilitating coordination, ensuring quality control, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration.

Effective translation movements also imposed epistemic filters, maintaining cultural coherence and avoiding content saturation by selectively integrating compatible knowledge systems. State-led initiatives and policy-driven patronage provided translators with institutional stability, intellectual legitimacy, and ideological guidance. Crucially, the most impactful translations were not literal conversions but interpretative acts—embedding foreign ideas within the metaphysical and ontological frameworks of the host civilization. These findings underscore that translation is not a neutral conduit of information, but a civilizational mechanism capable of either reinforcing or destabilizing cultural identity, depending on its ideological orientation.

### 5.1. Implications for modern Islamic civilization

The findings of this study hold important implications for contemporary Islamic societies, particularly within the framework of modern Islamic civilization as articulated by Imam Khamenei (2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2019). According to this vision, civilizational revival necessitates the integration of science, ethics, culture, and governance within a coherent and identity-preserving system.

Historical insights suggest that revitalizing translation today requires far more than technical proficiency; it demands a comprehensive strategy rooted in ideological awareness and civilizational purpose. This includes the establishment of centralized translation institutions grounded in Islamic epistemology—such as modern equivalents of Bayt al-Hikmah or ideologically informed think tanks—to coordinate and oversee translation efforts. Furthermore, the formulation of clear translation policies is essential, ensuring that translated content aligns with strategic scientific and ideological objectives.

Translators must be trained not merely as neutral transmitters of information, but as ideologically conscious mediators capable of adapting foreign knowledge within an Islamic framework. Strategic content curation is also critical, as indiscriminate adoption of Western paradigms risks cognitive overload and epistemic disorientation. Just as Greek philosophy was reframed through *kalaam* and *falsafah* during the Abbasid period, contemporary translation efforts must similarly embed foreign knowledge within Islamic ontological and metaphysical structures. Without adherence to these principles, translation may inadvertently deepen cultural dependency rather than serve as a vehicle for intellectual autonomy and civilizational renewal.

### 5.2. Strategic recommendations

To align translation efforts with the broader project of Modern Islamic Civilization, this study proposes a set of strategic recommendations aimed at restoring translation as a civilizational force. First, translation governance must be situated at the policy level and embedded within national civilizational strategies to ensure coherence, direction, and sustainability. This should be supported by the development of ideological training programs for translators, combining linguistic expertise with foundational knowledge in theology and civilizational studies. Additionally, the creation of digital repositories housing high-quality, culturally aligned translated works would enhance access and continuity. Clear criteria for content inclusion should also be established, prioritizing materials that align with Islamic worldviews and address the intellectual and societal needs of the Ummah. Finally, translation initiatives must expand beyond purely technical domains to encompass interdisciplinary fields such as science, philosophy, ethics, and jurisprudence. These measures collectively can revitalize translation as a transformative mechanism—bridging the rich legacy of Islamic thought with the challenges and opportunities of contemporary global engagement.

## 6. Conclusions

This study set out to investigate the civilizational role of translation in Islamic history by analyzing three major translation movements: the Sassanid, the Abbasid, and the Qajar periods. Drawing upon the cultural turn (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990, 1998) in translation

studies and guided by the vision of modern Islamic civilization as articulated by Imam Khamenei (2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2019), the research applied a qualitative thematic analysis to identify the underlying factors that have shaped the effectiveness and ideological impact of these movements. The findings clearly demonstrate that translation, when strategically managed and ideologically grounded, has historically acted as a transformative engine of civilizational growth. Six key factors—cultural mediation, strategic content selection, institutionalization, filtering against overload, ideological integration, and state patronage and policy-making—were identified as fundamental contributors to successful translation efforts in the past.

Among the three periods analyzed, the Abbasid model emerged as the most complete and impactful, integrating foreign knowledge within Islamic theological, philosophical, and political frameworks. The Sassanid translation legacy provided the pre-Islamic foundation, while the Qajar movement, despite its ambitiousness, lacked coherence and civilizational vision. In light of these insights, the paper argues that any contemporary effort to revive translation as a civilizational strategy must go beyond functional language transfer and reestablish translation as a deliberate, policy-oriented, and culturally aligned activity. This includes building institutional structures, training ideologically aware translators, and aligning content with the epistemological needs of the Islamic world.

Ultimately, by learning from the past and grounding translation efforts in a cohesive ideological vision, Islamic societies can re-enable translation to serve, not as an imitation tool, but as a tool for epistemic sovereignty and civilizational revival. Building on the study's historical findings regarding the role of institutional support and ideological frameworks in shaping translation movements, future research should delve into the specific mechanisms by which translation has served as a vehicle for cultural preservation and religious transmission during the Abbasid period. In particular, the influence of key Islamic figures, such as Imam Kazem, Imam Reza, and Imam Javad, Divine peace upon them, warrants focused examination—especially in terms of how their intellectual engagement within the Abbasid court environment has implicitly or explicitly guided translation priorities and epistemological integration.

Additionally, a promising area for future research lies in assessing the religious and philosophical literacy of contemporary Iranian translators, particularly their familiarity with Islamic principles and how such knowledge—or its absence—affects translation choices in fields like Islamic ethics, law, and civilizational discourse. This can be approached through empirical studies (e.g., translator interviews, textual analysis of religious translations) to determine how Islamic frameworks are preserved, adapted, or neglected in modern contexts. Finally, future inquiry could benefit from comparative analyses between historical translation movements and current institutional translation policies in Iran, identifying continuities and ruptures in state approaches, ideological orientations, and educational structures related to translation. Such research would offer not only a historical bridge but also practical insights into shaping more coherent and purposeful translation strategies today.

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