

دراسة نقدية لأربع ترجمات للتلطيف اللغوي في القرآن الكريم

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Translation of Quranic Euphemism into English: A Critical Review of Four Translations

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المستخلص Abstract

في الدراسة التي بين يديك قام الباحثون بتقييم ترجمة العبارات الملقفة في القرآن الكريم الى اللغة الانجليزية. وتناول التقييم اربع مترجمين عالميين وهم: أرثر اربري وعبد الحليم ومحمد بختال والمترجمين محمد خان وتقي الدين الهلالي. هدفت الدراسة الى تحري اساليب الترجمة التي استخدمها المترجمون للتعامل مع ترجمة العبارات الملقفة لغوياً في القرآن. وتماشياً مع طبيعة البحث ومشكلته واستلته، استخدم الباحثون الاسلوب النوعي الوصفي مضافاً الى تحليل النص المبني على التفاسير المعتمدة لتحليل النماذج القرآنية الملقفة لغوياً. اظهرت النتائج ان هنالك عدة عوامل تؤدي الى تعقيد ترجمة التلطيف اللغوي في القرآن منها دقة النص القرآني والمسافة الزمنية والاختلاف التركيبي بين اللغة العربية الفصحى واللغة الانجليزية الحديثة. وفي ضوء نموذج اوليمات (٢٠١٨) المعتمد في الدراسة الحالية، استخدم المترجمون اساليب مختلفة لترجمة معاني التلطيف اللغوي منها الترجمة الحرفية والترجمة غير الملقفة لغوياً وترجمة المعنى. ومن هذه الترجمات ما لم تستطع نقل المعنى المكافئ للنص الاصلي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تقييم، التلطيف اللغوي، ترجمة، القرآن الكريم، تقنيات

The present paper is a qualitative translation assessment of euphemism in the Holy Quran. The assessment included four world-famous translators; A. J. Arberry, M. Abdelhaleem, Mohammed Pickthal, Mohammad Khan and Taqi Al-Hilali. The study aims to explore the techniques used by translators to deal with translating euphemisms in the Holy Quran. In consistence with the problem and questions of research, the researchers adopt a descriptive qualitative method with exegetic text-based analysis. The study reveals that there are several factors that complicate translating euphemisms of the Quran, including the sensitivity of Quranic text, and temporal distance and structural differences between the classical Arabic and modern English. In light of Olimat (2018)'s model adopted in the current study, the translators use different strategies to render the meanings of euphemisms such as literal translation, non-euphemistic translation, and sense-for-sense translation. The translations in some cases failed to achieve a dynamic equivalence to the source text.

Keywords: Assessment, euphemism, Holy Quran, strategies, translation

1. Introduction

People must consider not only what they want to say but also how they should say it when using language as to communicate. They may have difficulty expressing unpleasant or embarrassing thoughts. Thus, speakers sometimes say things in an indirect way, a sociolinguistic phenomenon called *euphemism* (Fuller & Wardhaugh, 2015).

Euphemisms are words or expressions with better, clearer, or higher meanings or sounds that are used to substitute words with meanings or sounds that are regarded obnoxious, rude, or offensive in meaning or sound. They are used to mitigate impolite discourses, hide disrespectful views, conceal uncomfortable thoughts, and particularly to replace taboo words. Euphemism is the substitution of an unpleasant or direct expression for one that is more polite, when the first must be avoided due to religious concern, moral scruples, or civility. Euphemism is a linguistic term that is used in practically all languages, both spoken and written (Gomaa & Shi 2012).

Hughes (2006) observed a plethora of euphemistic expressions associated with taboo language in the holy scriptures such as the Bible. Words like “Jeez”, “Jeepers”, and “Gee” are often used by English speakers to replace the word *Jesus*. According to Olimat (2019), the Holy *Quran*, is loaded with euphemism as a metaphorical device and a polite style.

The current study investigates the translation of euphemism in the Muslim Holy Book, the *Quran*. Despite the fact that the *Quran* was revealed in the Arab Peninsula and was initially recorded in Arabic, it is read and recited by millions of Arabic, non-Arabic, Muslim and non-Muslim people around the world (Badawi, 2015). As a result, it has been translated into several languages, mostly English.

Previous researchers conducted studies on euphemisms in the Holy *Quran* and their rendering into English. However, the current researchers believes that the current study can reveal more insights, since in the careful selection of translators, the diversity of the cultural as well as linguistic background is considered.

1.2 Definitions of Euphemism

Euphemism is the replacement of taboos or impolite or offensive, unpleasant, hateful, or sad words with synonymous expressions that are polite, inoffensive, and benevolent expressions.. It is "A pleasant expression for something that is not pleasant". The recurrent themes of

euphemism could be religion, racism, ethics, etc. The aforementioned definitions are similar in essence. Euphemisms are employed for a variety of purposes. They are used to say things in an indirect way to avoid embarrassment. They could also be used to express inoffensive things in a more pleasant way to elevate their status (e.g. using attorney for lawyer or educator for teacher,). Moreover, euphemism is often used to hide disturbing concepts. In politics, they are used to blur facts or sugarcoat bitter realities (Khanfar, 2012)

1.3 Euphemism in the Holy *Quran*

Euphemisms are prevalent in the language of the Holy *Quran*. They are used to talk about sensitive issues for instance, sexual instances, death, illness, divorce, and various other issues. Al- Omoosh (2011) cited in Al-hammad and Salman (2013) distinguishes two main types of euphemisms in the Holy *Quran*: euphemisms for ethical decency and euphemisms for adversity. Euphemisms which are related to ethical decency include sexual intercourse, adultery, women, body parts, excretory functions, etc. On the other hand, euphemisms associated with adversity are used to deal with such topics as illness, inability, divorce, defeat, death, hunger and poverty. Such sensitive issues must be translated with high accuracy and equivalence.

1.4 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to examine the accuracy through different translations of the Holy *Quran* from Arabic into English, concentrating on euphemism in the Holy *Quran*. It assesses the accuracy or deviation in meaning from the original in light of exegeses. The researchers also determine whether this inaccuracy is a result of the translating method or poor understanding of the meaning of *Quranic* verses. The study also assess how euphemistic expressions are translated by professional translators from different backgrounds. Finally, the researchers provide recommendations on how to deal with and develop the translation of euphemistic expressions in the Holy *Quran*.

1.5 Significance and contribution of the study

In general, lack of equivalent terms is considered one of the most challenging issues that translators may encounter while translating any expressive text, whether it is literary text, religious text or other types of texts. In particular, euphemistic expressions in the *Quran* are rhetorical features that place additional burden on translators, especially those of other culture and language than Arabic. It is hoped that this study will

help current and future translators of religious texts produce accurate and precise translations of euphemistic expressions in the Holy *Quran*. Also, by investigating the challenges and strategies of euphemism from the Holy *Quran*, the results of this study will benefit researchers and translators.

1.6 Statement of the problem

Since some words, including euphemistic words, can have multiple meanings, translating the Holy *Quran* has always been a difficult task in Islamic theology. The opponents of translating the *Quran* argue that its unique genre is itself a mystery (Martin, 1982). In order to provide an accurate translation, the context must be taken into account. This leads to a shortage of equivalent terms in the target language and results in lexical gaps.

On the other hand, the sensitivity and status of the Holy *Quran* make it very important to achieve an accurate translation. El-Hadary (2008) remarks that many *Quran* translations concentrate on the meaning of the context far from the free or literal translation method.

However, some of these translations oppose the original text and are unclear and hard to understand.

1.7 Research questions:

In light of the translation assessment, the study addresses and answers the following questions:

1. What are the challenges of translating euphemistic expressions in the Holy *Quran*?
2. What are the strategies followed by translators under study to overcome such challenges?
- 3- Are there differences in the translation techniques between Arabic and non-Arabic translators?

2. Literature review

Despite the fact that the translation of the *Quran* from Arabic into other languages is difficult and has always been viewed with doubts, there has been a vast interest of *Quran* translations over the last few decades. For many Arabic and non-Arabic speakers, the *Quran* is considered too sophisticated of a text to understand, or a fortiori, to translate even by those who spend years studying the Arabic language (Bergman, 2009).

Mohammed (2007) evaluated the the English translations of four *Quranic* euphemisms by Pickthall and Zaidan. Because of their

significance in the Holy *Quran*, he recommended that an accurate translation of euphemistic expressions should be considered by maintaining the image as well as the meaning of the euphemism. As a result, he decided that a translation that sacrifices either part does not reflect the *Quranic* style, which is a vital element of understanding the *Quran*.

Al-Qadi (2009) conducted a sociolinguistic assessment of euphemisms in several varieties in English and Modern Standard Arabic. Although this investigation is not directly linked to the *Quranic* euphemisms, its results provide significant insights of euphemisms in English and Arabic in general.

Abdelhaleem (2011) looked into euphemism in the Holy *Quran* by focusing on marital relationship in Surat Al-Baqarah, Ayas 222-3. His study is inspired by the observation that the manner of women's status addressed in the Holy *Quran* is often misinterpreted. The study has found that misinterpretation occurs as a result of linguistic and cultural decontextualizing of a euphemistic expression as well as failure to regard the *Quranic* style accurately.

Al-Hamad and Salman (2013) investigated an analytical study of 23 *Quranic* euphemisms randomly chosen. Their investigation has concluded that translating *Quranic* euphemisms causes certain challenges by reason of linguistic and cultural variety. They indicated some inadequately translated euphemisms and tried to suggest different translations based on functional standards.

Albanon (2022) investigated the accuracy and strategies of translating euphemistic intimate expressions in the Holy Quran by two linguistically and culturally distant translators; Yusuf Ali and John Arberry. The researcher adopted qualitative design in light of al-Mizan exegesis. Though, with less equivalence and rhetoric, it was indicated that the euphemistic features of the source text were preserved more in Ali's translations than Arberry's. This could be attributed to Ali's Quran-oriented culture and knowledge of Arabic exegeses.

Although a few studies have been conducted on translating euphemism in the Quran, this topic has not been studied duly and systematically. Most previous studies lack a systematic model and sampling. The current study uses Olimat (2018)'s model as a guideline to explore the euphemism translation techniques used by the translators

under study. The researchers also underline the semantic loss in the translations and suggest alternative translations and solutions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Theory, design and approach

The current study adopts a qualitative design based on the analytical descriptive approach of L1- L2 comparative semantic analysis. Accredited dictionaries such as *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li alfaz al-Quran* (Indexed Dictionary of Quranic Expressions) by al-Baqi (1995) is referred to as well as the *Al-Isfahani* (2010)'s *mufradat alfaz al-Quran* (words of the Quran), which adequately explain Quranic entries in particular. Unanimous exegeses especially *al-Mizan Exegesis* by al-Tabataba'ei (1997) and al-Tabari (1994) are adopted to help in the analysis of the sophisticated religious language of the Holy Quran. The assessment of meaning is also conducted in light of Nida's translation theory of formal and functional (dynamic) equivalence. In some cases, an alternative translation is suggested by the researchers.

3.2 Sampling, data and translators

The data comprises ten verses of euphemistic expressions, selected based on the *purposive sampling method*, for translation assessment. The variables of religion and mother tongue; Arabic vs. non- Arabic translators were considered in an attempt to have a representative model of the various available translations of the Holy Quran.

Four translators of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds are selected: *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran* by Al-Hilali and Khan (Indian), *The Glorious Quran with English Translation* by Pickthal (English), *The Koran Interpreted* by A.J. Arberry (English), and *The Quran: a new translation* by Abdelhaleem (Arabic).

3.3 Model

Whereas the accuracy assessment is based on exegeses and specialized dictionaries, the examination of techniques adopted in translating the verses under study is conducted in light of the model proposed by Olimat (2018). The following conceptual framework illustrates this model.

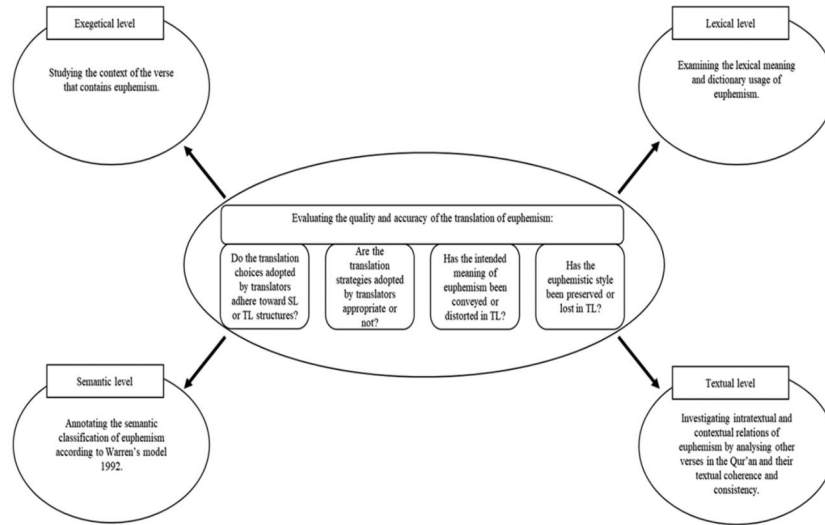


Figure (1): Olimat’s model for translating euphemistic *Quranic* expressions

4. Analysis
(Verse 1)

﴿أَجَلٌ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ﴾ (البقرة: ١٨٧)

Transliteration: *Alrafathu ila nisa'ikum*

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

“to lie with your wives”

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

“to have sexual relations with your wives”

Arberry (T3)

“to go in to your wives”

Pickthall (T4)

“to go unto your wives on the night of the fast”

The noun “*rafath*” has several meanings based on the context in which it occurs and how it is used. It could mean ‘indecent speech’, lewdness, foreplay, ‘sexual seduction’ and ‘sexual intercourse’. (*Al-Isfahani, 2010*). The verse is about the permission of Allah for married couples to have sexual intercourse during the designated period during the fasting month of Ramadan (*Al-sheerazi, 2005 & Al- Taba'tabae,*

Translation of Quranic Euphemism into English..... (661)

1997). It is a metonym for dysphemistic words of invitation for sexual intercourse (Al-Isfahani, 2010).

In his translation, Abdelhaleem adopts a semantic translation. He introduces a euphemistic translation using the expression “lie with,” which suggests coitus without the mentioning of the word “sex”. Khan & Al-Hilali translate the euphemistic expression explicitly using the collocation “*sexual relations*”. Despite the fact that they use the word “*relations*” after the adjective “*sexual*” they avoid using the word *intercourse*, which is more sex-suggestive in an endeavor to produce a euphemistic translation. Arberry tries a free translation rendering the term “*rafath*” euphemistically into “*go into*”. Pickthall translates the word “*rafath*” euphemistically using the expression “*go unto*,” which is similar to the expression used in the Bible, (see Leviticus 18:19).

All four translators used sense-for-sense (less) euphemistic translations.

(Verse 2)

﴿ هُنَّ لِيَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِيَاسٌ لَهُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ ﴾ (البقرة، ١٨٧)

Transliteration: *huna libasun lakum wa antum libasun lahun*

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

“They are (close) as garments to you, as you are to them”

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

“They are *libas* (i.e. body cover, or screen,) for you and you are the same for them.”

Arberry (T3)

“They are a vestment for you, and you are a vestment for them.”

Pickthall (T4)

“They are raiment for you and you are raiment for them.”

Al-Isfahani (2010) establishes that the noun “*libas*,” derived from the verb “*labisa*,” literally means “dress”, one that especially touches the skin. This term refers to the amount of intimacy and closeness that exists between spouses to the point that as if they were wearing a single dress. Exegeses comment that this term is a metaphor to show the emotional connection between a husband and wife, and how they provide comfort, reassurance, and need to each other (Al- Taba'tabae, 1997). Ibn Faris observes that the entries of “*libas*” (la, ba, sa) indicate mingling, which is

the basis of sexual intercourse. He argues that the same entries are used for “*iltabas*” (mix) as in “*iltabas alayhi al-shei*” (things got mixed up/confused him) (Ibn Faris, 1999).

The expression appears to have been translated literally by most translators. However, Abdelhaleem adds the word “*close*” parenthetically draw the target readers’ attention to the degree of intimacy and closeness between the husband and wife in this verse. He also uses “*as*” before ‘garment’ as a simile for a two-fold purpose; first to indicate that the euphemistic expression is metaphoric, and second to describe how close the relationship should be between a husband and wife. Arberry and Pickthall opt for a literal translation using the words “*vestment*” and “*raiment*”, respectively without adding any words like Abdelhaleem did. This results in a non-dynamic translation in terms of Nida; a translation that lacks the spirit of meaning in the expression of the source text. This eventually results in semantic loss in the target text, which confuses the English readers of the target text. Khan & Al-Hilali try a literal translation along with the use of transliteration and parenthetical translation. They stress the fact that the garment here is the type that directly touches the body (screen, body cover).

Another explanation of why the Quran uses the word “*libas*” is because it covers (protects) men from the harsh environment and so is a spouse, who protects a husband or wife from external temptations of the out-of-wedlock intercourse. Moreover, the word “*libas*” means shield of war. In that sense, it is used in another verse in the Quran (21:80).

The researchers of the current study propose “*vest*”, which has a double meaning of *underclothes* and a *chest armor*, which protects man from the external risks of war, and thus it can be used metaphorically for protection from the battle of temptation.

(Verse 3)

﴿ فَأَلْقَنَ بِشِرْطِ رُءُوسِهِمْ فِي السَّمَاءِ مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُّوا وَأَشْرَبُوا ﴾ (البقرة : ١٨٧)

Transliteration: *falaana bashiruhunna*

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

“now you can lie with them”

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

“so now have sexual relations with them”

Arberry (T3)

“so now lie with them”

Pickthall (T4)

“so hold intercourse with them”

The term “*bashiruhunna*” is derived from the verb “*Bashara*”, which means ‘to undertake or carry out’, which indicates commencement (Al-Isfahani, 2010). *Quranic* exegeses interpret the expression as a permission to have lovemaking during the night of Ramadan, which had been forbidden by Allah before the revelation of this verse (Al-Sheerazi, 2005 & Al- Taba'tabae, 1997).

Abdelhaleem applies a sense-for-sense translation. Thus, his translation is euphemistic. He reserves the source euphemism by using an equal euphemism in the target language. Khan & Al-Hilali try a sense-for-sense non-euphemistic translation, using the collocation “*sexual relations*.” Arberry attempt a euphemistic translation using the euphemistic expression “*lie with*”. Pickthall translates the expression euphemistically by using “*intercourse*” without mentioning the word “*sexual*” in his translation.

(Verse 4)

﴿ قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴾

(ال عمران : ٤٧)

Transliteration: *wa lam yamsasny basharun*

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

“When no man has touched me?”

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

“When no man has touched me.”

Arberry (T3)

“How shall I have a son seeing no mortal has touched me?”

Pickthall (T4)

“How can I have a child when no mortal has touched me?”

The word “*yamsasny*” is derived from the verb “*masa*” which literally means ‘to touch or feel’ (Al-Isfahani, 2010). However, al-Tabatabaei (1982) states that the Holy *Quran* uses it euphemistically to mean “to have sexual intercourse with”. This sense is also used by the *Quran* in another verse with another cognate verb:

﴿ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا ﴾ (النساء ٤٣)

"If ye are ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women, and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth"

(Ali, 2001)

All four translators adopt a literal translation resulting in a *formal equivalence*. The context and the words supporting it used by the translators reveal that the translators adopt a covert translation. However, their translations might have resulted in a semantic loss. No English dictionary has listed "touch" to mean "have sexual intercourse with." Even when it does have sexual connotations, yet it does not amount to the level of actual sex.

(Verse 5)

﴿ وَالَّذِي يَأْتِيكَ الْفَحِشَةُ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّىٰ يَتَوَفَّيَهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا ﴾ (النساء : ١٥)

Transliteration: alfahishta

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

"If any of your women commit a lewd act"

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

"And those of your women who commit illegal sexual intercourse"

Arberry (T3)

"Such of your women as commit indecency"

Pickthall (T4)

"As for those of your women who are guilty of lewdness"

The word "*alfahishta*" is derived from the verb "*fuhsh*" which is a polite way to mean 'obscene, vulgar' (Al-Isfahani, 2010). It is similar to the word "*rafath*" in the sense that they are both literally mean vulgar speech yet used as metonymy for sexual intercourse. The subtle difference is that "*fahisha*" indicates forbidden intercourse whereas "*rafath*" could refer to legal intercourse.

The *Quranic* exegeses state that this verse revolves about women who have illegal relationships, where evidence of conviction should be taken from four witnesses (Al-sheerazi, 2005 & Al- Taba'tabae, 1997).

Translation of Quranic Euphemism into English..... (665)

Abdelhaleem, Arberry, and Pickthall adopt a literal approach in rendering this euphemistic expression. However, this time the literal translation is equivalent because the word “lewd” also carries a euphemistic feature as “*fahisha*.” On the other hand, Khan & Al- Hilali adopt paraphrasing and thus, they also manage to produce an equivalent euphemistic expression.

(Verse 6)

﴿ وَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِوَهُمْ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴾ (يوسف : ٢٤)

Transliteration: *walakt hammat bihi wa hmma biha*

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

“She made for him, and he would have succumbed to her”

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

“And indeed she did desire him, and he would have inclined to her desire”

Arberry (T3)

“For she desired him; and he would have taken her”

Pickthall (T4)

“She verily desired him, and he would have desired her”

The verb “*hamma*” means ‘to intend or to plan something’ (Al-Isfahani, 2010, & Al- Tabatabaei,1997). Exegeses of the *Quran* establish that this expression indicates to Minister’s wife, who tried to seduce Yusuf to have lovemaking with him and that he would have “*hamma*” (‘singular masculine’ tried) to push her since Allah Has protected him from committing this grave sin (Al-Tabari, 1994 & Al- Taba'tabae, 1997).

All four translations are euphemistic. However, Abdelhaleem is the most accurate in rendering the meaning of the verb “*hamma*.” Unlike “desire”, the verb “make for” denotes direction “go toward,” which is suitable for the situation where the Minister’s wife went toward him in desire while he went toward her to stop her (see Webster, 2004)

(Verse 7)

﴿ يَنْبَغِيءَ آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ لِبَاسًا يُورِي سَوْءَ تِكْمٍ وَرِدْشًا وَلِبَاسَ التَّقْوَى ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴾ (الاعراف : ٢٦)

Transliteration: *libasan yuwary saw'atikum*

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

“Garments to cover your nakedness”

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

“Raiment upon you to cover your private parts”

Arberry (T3)

“A garment to cover your shameful parts”

Pickthall (T4)

“Raiment to conceal your shame”

The expression “*saw'atikum*” is a noun which means “private parts” (*Al-Isfahani, 2010*). The *Quranic* exegeses explain that the noun “*sawatikum*” is an implicit suggestion to the “private parts”. Since the mentioning of human private parts is sensitive, the euphemistic expression is used in the *Quran* to refer to that meaning (*Al-Tabari, 1994 & Al- Taba'tabae, 1997*).

All four translators agree on the use of sense-for-sense translation to translate the underlined euphemistic expression. Such a method as stated in this research is a productive technique, which managed to translate the connotation of the euphemism in the source text with a euphemistic translation. However, Abdelhaleem and Khan and Hilali are more accurate in avoiding the literal denotation of “bad” in the word “*saw'ah*”. The other two translators add “shame” and “shameful,” which indicates they were unaware of the overall connotative euphemistic fact that unlike its root, the word “*saw'ah*” does not necessarily indicate “badness” (*Al-Baqi, 1995*).

(Verse 8)

﴿ قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لِمَنْ إِنْ أَلَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴾
(النور , ٣٠)

Transliteration: *furojahum*

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

“And guard their private parts”

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

“And protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts)”

Arberry (T3)

“And guard their private parts”

Pickthall (T4)

“And be modest”

Al-Isfahani, (2010) and Al- Ba'alabaky (1995) state that the word “*furoj*” is derived from the noun “*farj*” which can mean “gap” or in this context, “private part”. Exegetical references state that this verse is prohibiting Muslims from looking at what is forbidden for them and commanding them to protect themselves from committing illegal relationships (Al-sheerazi, 2005 & Al- Taba'tabae, 1997).

Abdelhaleem, Khan & Al- Hilali, and Arberry use the same expression “*private parts*”. Hence, they adopt a word for word translation. Khan & Al- Hilali add extra euphemism parenthetically in order to draw the reader’s attention to the concept that the Quranic euphemism above is discussing sexual relations.

(Verse 9)

﴿ وَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يَؤُسُفٍ وَأَبْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزَنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴾ (يوسف , ٨٤)

Transliteration: *wa abyadhat eaynah*

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

“His eyes went white with grief and he was filled with sorrow”

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

“And he lost his sight because of the sorrow that he was suppressing”

Arberry (T3)

“And his eyes turned white because of the sorrow that he choked within him”

Pickthall (T4)

“And his eyes were whitened with the sorrow that he was suppressing”

Since the black part of the eye is responsible for vision, the Holy *Quran* uses the verb “whiten,” which is a very interesting euphemistic metaphor for blindness.

The word “*abyadhat*” is derived from the verb “*abyada*” which literarily means “becomes white” (Al-Isfahani, 2010 & Al- Ba'alabaky, 1995). *Quranic* exegeses state that the term “*abyadhat*” is used here as a euphemistic metaphor to mean “lost vision” or “blindness”. (Al-sheerazi, 2005 & Al- Taba'tabae, 1997).

Arberry and Pickthall translate the euphemistic expression clearly. Their translations preserved euphemism and the metaphoric meaning. On

Translation of Quranic Euphemism into English..... (668)

the other hand, Khan & Al- Hilali translate the euphemistic expression literally resulting in a semantic loss.

(Verse 10)

﴿ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا

حُدُودَ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ (البقرة , ٢٣٠)

Transliteration: *hatta tankih zawjan ghayrah*

Translation:

Abdelhaleem (T1)

“until she has taken another husband”

Khan & Al- Hilali (T2)

“until she has married another husband”

Arberry (T3)

“until she marries another husband”

Pickthall (T4)

“until she has wedded another husband”

The term “*tankih*” is from the verb “*nakah*” and in some other *Quranic verses*, it literally means to “marry” However, in this context it means “sexual intercourse” (Al-Isfahani, 2010, & Al- Ba'alabaky, 1995). According to *Quranic exegeses*, this verse states that if a husband divorces his wife three times in a row, then she is no longer allowed to marry him until she first marries another man (Al-sheerazi, 2005& Al-Taba'tabae, 1997).

Khan and Al- Hilali, Arberry, and Pickthall render the verb “*tankiha*” with its dictionary meaning “to marry”. On the other hand, by avoiding the use of “marry,” Abdelhaleem attempts an idiomatic translation. They all translated literally without considering the contextual and connotative meanings of the verb.

5. Conclusions

The current study has examined euphemistic expressions from different *surahs* of the Holy *Quran* and their English translations by four translators. The study has revealed that the four translators at times were successful in their translation when they adopted euphemistic or sense-for-sense translation. However, other times their translations mostly lacked accuracy when they used literal translation or transliteration resulting in vague meanings or semantic loss.

The analysis indicate that translating euphemistic meanings of the Holy *Quran* is a challenging task. This is because *Quranic* euphemisms involve very subtle and rhetorical differences in meaning that are difficult to understand especially by those with less command on Arabic. The cultural differences as well contribute to this burden since euphemisms are sometimes structured in culture-driven idioms. Therefore, the Arabic translators were more attentive to the contextual meaning and connotative meanings of the euphemism, while the non-Arabic translators mostly adopted a literal translation, which often resulted in vague and erroneous translation.

Moreover, insufficient knowledge of the *Quran* and its exegeses result in failure to identify the implicit meanings of euphemisms in the *Quran* leading to mistranslations and semantic loss in some of the translations.

It is important to note that some Islamic concepts and culture-specific expressions are untranslatable. This requires that footnotes or parenthetical explanations be given in order to convey the correct meaning. For that reason, Abdelhaleem's translation of Quranic euphemism is the closest to functional equivalence. Khan and al-Hilali come next, then Arberry and Pickthal occupy the third place equally.

To sum up, the study has concluded that translating euphemisms of the Holy *Quran* requires more than one method or technique. Therefore, in order to convey the intended meaning and paying attention to the connotative or contextual meaning in the *Quranic* texts, the translators under study follow different strategies such as paraphrasing, transliteration, partial equivalence, literal translation, functional translation, addition and parentheses, euphemistic and non-euphemistic translation.

6. Recommendations

This study offers the recommendations given below to assist the translators of *Quranic* euphemisms:

- Using specialized dictionaries to adequately hold the various shades of meaning of euphemism.
- *Quranic* exegeses are significantly helpful for translators of euphemisms in the *Quran* because they provide the translators with a deep understanding of the euphemism.
- Translators should distant themselves from literal translation since it is not the best method for metaphor and euphemism translation.

Further research

- Conducting a study to examine the difference between Arabic translators and non- Arabic translators in translating euphemism of the Holy *Quran*.
- Researchers can conduct a similar study focusing on the ideology and denominations of translators rather than their linguistic background.

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