

الانعطافات النحوية والدلالية في الخطاب القرآني: دراسة نقدية

في ترجمتين كلاسيكيتين في اللغة الانكليزية للقران الكريم

## Syntactic & Semantic Deviations in the Qur'anic Discourse: A Critical Study in Two Classical English Translations

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### الملخص

إن ترجمة القرآن متعددة الأوجه إلى حد كبير ، ليس فقط بسبب التغيرات النحوية فيه ولكن أيضاً بسبب اختياراته الدلالية ، وقد تسبب ذلك دائماً في إشكالية كبيرة في الترجمة. إذ على الرغم من أن القرآن يوصف غالباً بأنه "تلاوة عربية" ، فإن الغالبية العظمى من المترجمين المسلمين وغير المسلمين يواجهون صعوبة كبيرة في فهم وترجمة آياته معتقدين أن لغته ليست من هذا العالم أو لا تنتمي لإنسان محدد. ومع ذلك ، فإن بعض المترجمين لديهم دوافع داخلية أو خارجية لترجمة التغيرات التي تحصل في معانيه وآليته النحوية خصوصاً عند تقديم وترجمة بعض آياته. يستعرض هذا البحث مثل هذه التحولات النحوية والدلالية ويعزز هذه الحجة بأمثلة من ترجمتين كلاسيكيتين للقرآن: أربيري وهلاي وخان. والهدف من ذلك هو إجراء مزيد من التقييم لهذه الترجمتين ومعرفة كيف تتلاعب الاختيارات المعجمية والدلالية للمترجمين بالنص الأصلي للقرآن. تكشف النتائج أن استخدام المترجمين لاختيارات نحوية ودلالية مختلفة قد غير الموقف والمعاني الأيديولوجي للقرآن. ولذا فمن المتوقع أن تساهم هذه الورقة البحثية في تعزيز كل من الدراسات الترجمية للقرآن والترجمة الدينية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحولات النحوية – التلاوة – الاختيارات الدلالية – الانعطافات – الدلالة الایدولوجية

### **.Abstract:**

*Qur'an is highly multifaceted not only because of its syntactic deviations but also because of its semantic choices and has therefore always been exceedingly problematic to translate. For though that the Qur'an is often described as "an Arabic recitation," a great majority of Muslim and non-Muslim translators face a great difficulty in understanding and translating its verses believing that its language is not of this world or does not belong to a specific human being. Still, some translators have internally or externally motivated deviations in its meanings and in its syntactic mechanism when rendering some of its verses. This article teases out such syntactic and semantic shifts and reinforces this argument with examples from two classical translations of the Qur'an: Arberry and Hilali and Khan. The aim is to further examine and find out how the lexical and semantic choices of the two translators manipulate the original text of the Qur'an. The findings reveal that the use of different syntactic and semantic choices of the two translators has changed the ideological stance of the Qur'an. This paper is expected to contribute to both Qur'an translation studies and religious translation.*

**Keywords:** syntactic shift, recitation, semantic choice, deviations, ideological stance

## **1. Introduction**

According to Robinson (2000, 103–107) religious translation is problematic in terms of the significance of translation. In recent years, there has been a flood of articles highlighting the problems of translating the Qur'an. This paper will start by reviewing some of these problems, the Qur'an translations, the challenges and the approaches, followed by an overview of the literature on this topic which discusses cases in point. Based on the overview, the author can then formulate the aim of the study and the gaps it intends to fill.

Deviation means moving away from an ascertained course or usual standards. There are several categories of deviation like syntactic deviation, pragmatic deviation, lexical deviation and semantic deviation. In this article, the emphasis is on syntactic and semantic deviation. Semantic deviation includes metaphor, simile, pun and style. It shows that a trope or a word or a phrase can have many different meanings and can be used in different contexts. The factual meaning can be altered

from the ostensible meaning. On the other hand, syntactic deviation refers to a set of rules that are broken in some way or a departure from normal grammar in rearrangement, shift of tense and pronouns.

Although the term, deviation, is explained for the purposes of the paper in the above lines, it may be helpful to note that the term is used in literary analysis of discourse and not in descriptive linguistic analysis. That is, there can be syntactic differences, variations, etc., and it is important to note the use of literary (syntactic) variation (Rodríguez-Silva, Stewart & Rodríguez-Narciso, 2021; Muwafi and Fareh, 2021). For example, the author notes that there is cross-linguistic variation between English and Arabic and literal meaning will not capture the intent of the original. This is a well trotted issue in translation and linguistic analysis. Hence, the author will narrow down the specific areas of cross-linguistic variation that will be discussed in the paper and the rationale for studying these (e.g., less understood/studied, common in the corpus, etc.). The final paragraph of this section provides some of this analysis and justifications.

The present study attempts to elucidate the area of the translation of the meanings of the Qur'an, namely, the problems that may occur in translating the explicit and implicit meanings of tropes such metaphor, idioms and ambivalence and syntactic deviations in the Qur'an such as shifts of tense and pronouns. For the use of syntactic and semantic structures in the Qur'an aims to transfer implied messages and deep meanings, which have to be indicated in translation. If the translator of the Qur'an does not exercise more efforts to realize the explicit and implicit meanings of these structures, s/he will misread the text, and hence will translate them word for word, which is not suitable in the case of religious translation.

As we analyze the existence and the contribution of these syntactic and semantic deviations in the two selected translations: Arberry and Hilali and Khan, we try to achieve two objectives: to identify the syntactic and semantic deviations in the selected translations and to tease out how those deviations affect the two translators' choices. Examples will be taken from different Qur'anic verses and we will use the Reiss's (2000) functional model of assessment that involves a series of activities in performing a qualitative stylistic analysis.

We argue that when words change their meaning in the Qur'an, they do so in the context of other related words in English language. For alterations in form and meaning may occur because words and structures constantly used in Arabic language and what Arabic speakers intend is not exactly the same as in English

language. For instance, tenses in Arabic language may not be transferred literally. Therefore, they need an alteration to transfer the intended meaning to the target readers. This type of a syntactic change is a change from the past tense to the imperfect tense to attain that effect. It is for invoking an important action in the minds of the English audience as if it were happening in the present. On the other hand, the simplest type of semantic change in the Quran lies in its polysemous words, which are words containing a basic and a related figurative meaning. Typical for such figurative meaning is that it happens in a phrase in which its metaphorical use is distinct. However, if a different intention for a translated word is shared by two translators and becomes established in usage then a semantic change has occurred to the original message.

Previous attention for former studies has been almost exclusively on the syntactic features themselves rather than on the semantics of the religious language. Therefore, this work deals, in the first place, with two translations of the Qur'an, giving an accent to the problems of semantic and syntactic changes that the two translators have had and that is translating metaphor, idioms, proper names and ambivalence as well as syntactic shifts in the Qur'an.

## **2. Importance of the study**

The aim of this paper is to fill a lacuna in the field of Qur'an translation studies or religious translation from Arabic into English. Besides, the significance of the study can be well- expressed in a way that it identifies the methods of the two translators that have manipulated a variety of human activities, thoughts, feelings and beliefs. For the syntactic and semantic deviations in the Qur'an may in several respects add to foreign people's understanding of these structures in the Arabic language. In so doing, the study tackles this vital issue from two perspectives, namely: syntactic and semantic perspectives.

The study analyzes two translations of the Qur'anic verses (Arberry and Hilali and Khan). These are cogitated semantically and syntactically to pinpoint the problems that might have faced the translators when rendering them. Such problems could lead to faults or vagueness in the two translations. Hence, the study attempts to find out the problems in order to avoid entrusting mistakes and to recommend solutions to these problems.

## **3. The Statement of the problem**

The paper argues that the selected translators in many cases have failed to produce an equivalence via the syntactic equivalence that may have been possible. These

inexactitudes may have arisen from insufficient syntactic knowledge of the Arabic language or the translators may have maintained negligible similarity to the source language for no ostensible cause. This can cause misconception of the intended meaning of the source language.

For Muslims and non-Muslim translators face many problems in the process of translating the Qur'an; however, few studies have endeavored to study the problem of translating the tropes such metaphor, idioms and pragmatic ambivalence as well as the syntactic deviations in the Qur'an. The two translators under the study: Arberry and Hilali and Khan have translated most of these aforementioned structures and expressions word for word without transmitting the underlying meanings or showing the reasons for these syntactic deviations. Nonetheless, successful rendering cannot be achieved without looking up the interpretations that can show deep meanings accurately. In fact, there is an urgent need to have an exegetical translation of the Qur'an that observes, transfers and combines, as much as possible, all its features together: pragmatic ambivalence, syntactic accuracy, polysemous meanings and tropes.

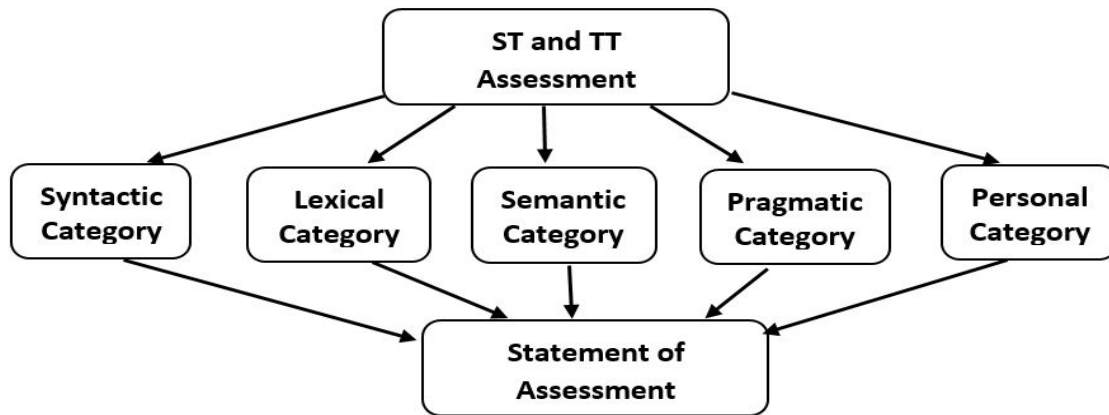
#### **4. Methodology**

The paper is a critical study of the semantic/syntactic deviations in two translations of the Qur'an. In doing this, we have selected two English translations of the Qur'an to compare and contrast translations of metaphor, idioms, ambivalence and syntactic shifts in the two translations. There are several translations for the Qur'an; nevertheless, two translations have been selected: Mohsin Khan & Muhammad Al-Hilali (1999) and J. Arberry (1996). They are the most widely used in the English-speaking world, and they represent the most classical translations of the Qur'an. For these two translations are the most widely used and, hence, encountered by English speaking readers. The author also needs to indicate that the analysis is qualitative, yet in order to establish that there are consistent 'deviations' in these translations, the treatment of the corpus will be discussed through the analysis. Add to this, the author notes how many verses (or lines of text) are analyzed and it seems that they are the entire verses in both translations. In few cases, they are the verses that are randomly selected.

#### **5. Theoretical model**

To operate the translation analysis, we use Reiss's (2000) functional model of assessment. Four categories are identified: syntactic deviation, pragmatic deviation,

lexical deviation and semantic deviation. Lexical and semantic categories can actually be subsumed under the rubric of ‘linguistic’ category. According to Reiss (2000, p.16), the assessment of any translation must be carried out by comparing the ST and TT and the purpose of comparison must be done for an objective evaluation.



As the figure above shows, we will draw the comparison between Qur’anic discourses of the selected verses with the two translations in terms of the two major categories: semantic and syntactic. First, we tackle the syntactic category in which the appraisal is done according to text types, i.e., the analysis has to tackle the ST first to specify the changes that have been kept invariant in the two translated texts, in addition to the main functions of the language used. Secondly, the semantic category in which we stress the wide diversity of extralinguistic factors that regulate the translator’s choice among the different means offered by one’s language. We focus on the equivalence of semantic choices, adequacy of syntactic choices, correctness of lexical structures and similarity of stylistic choices. Amidst all of this, we consider the personal category.

## 6. Literature review: problems in religious translation

Religious translation conveys the meaning of a certain sacred text from one language into another by using the nearest possible equivalents. However, Haleem (1999) and Ghazala (2008) believe that there seems to be no full equivalence between Arabic and English languages with reference to the Qur’an. For the meaning of the word, “Qur’an”, indicates that it is publicized as an oral recitation and not as a written book to its audience.

For Robinson (2000), full equivalence in religious translation is challenging in terms of the status of translation. Naudé (2010) justifies this saying that there are two contexts that mark in a powerful gap between cultures. Firstly, when the absence of culture-specific contextual knowledge makes it difficult to form

consistency between what is said and what is understood. Secondly, when nonverbal and verbal attitude do not harmonize. Therefore, religious translation appears to more difficult than any other translation especially for the Qur'anic discourse because it is full of cultural-bound non-equivalent terms.

However, there have been many translations for the Qur'an in the 20th century made by non-Muslims such as Marmaduke Pickthall (1930), R. Bell (1937), A. J. Arberry (1955), T. B. Irving (1992) and Hilali & Khan (1996). Yet a major problem that all have face when the source text or word may state a concept that is completely unidentified in the target culture (Holes, 2000 and Naudé, 2010). The metaphor or the idiom or the proper name may be abstract or concrete; it may connect to a religious belief or culture-specific concept (Baker, 1992).

Thirdly, another problem faced by the translators of the Qur'an is the strain in rendering some of its semantic and syntactic items. Israel, (2019) believes that this has caused various aspects of Islam to be promoted and rendered inversely and to different degrees. For the absence of direct counterparts in English language have forced the non-Muslim translators to convey them in a communicative manner. In fact, it is the cultural bumps or cultural differences that present real problems for non-Muslim translators.

Focusing on pragmatic losses of Qur'an translations, Al-Azab and Al-Misned (2012, p.43) discuss another problem which is the referential flexibility of the Qur'anic words which indicates that a term can hold a multiplicity of "sense-components". For example, the meaning of a word may extend to refer to different characteristics and multivariate analysis, making it difficult for the translator to answer this problem of multiplicity.

Baker (1992) examines the problem of the translation of syntactic structures in sacred texts stating that a language often enforces limits on the way messages may be established in that language. The sequence in which functional elements such as subject, predicate may follow is more stable in some languages than in others. Likewise, Abdul-Raof (2001) and Devine and Stephens (2006) study the problem of the syntactic constituents and word order translation in the Quran. Abdul-Raof (2006) maintains that the different word orders in the Qur'an express multi-colored propositional stances and transfer illocutionary forces. That is, these word arrangements lead to various elucidations on the part of the readers due to the need of previous knowledge and current evidence in its reading. In the same vein, Devine and Stephens (2006) state that the pragmatic and aesthetic properties of word order

are often lost in Qur'an translations. This is attributed to the deviation from the source language due to the contextual and pragmatic elements.

Given the (probable) vast literature on religious translation, the author needs to provide additional content in this section. Therefore, the section commences with some brief review of the notion of equivalence in religious translated texts (not just the Qur'an). In the literature, the definition of equivalence is elastic and fuzzy. It includes semantics, grammar, phonology and pragmatics. Characteristically, there are four key categories of equivalence: (i) Pragmatic, where data and content are only elated; (ii) Aesthetic, which is related to poetic texts where a meaningful and stylistic equivalent to the author's work is produced; (iii) Ethnographic, aiming to reconstruct the cultural background, usually through scholarly annotation; (iv) Linguistic, which comprises an interlinear word-for-word or even morpheme-for-morpheme translation (Newman, 1980, pp. 62-63)<sup>1</sup>. This paper concentrates on linguistic equivalence or more exactly on equivalence at the syntactic and semantic levels, while discussing the factors and strategies that guide the actual translation process of syntactic units appearing in the Qur'an.

To sum up, the Qur'an forms a unique genre with a special sacred texture that speaks about God and religious life. It contains several layers of syntactic structures and multifaceted meanings that make it hard to be translated especially to a target language that is far remote from the original. According to former studies, the big challenge faced by its translators is the search for finding the right equivalents for its religious terms and the absence of the development of specialized academic curricula in this field. That is why, the essence of the present study is to examine the problems that two translators face when translating the metaphor, idioms, pragmatic ambivalence and the syntactic shifts in the Qur'an. The aim of this study is not only to stress the details for inaccuracies in Qur'anic translations but also to accentuate the need to read translations with a critical sense.

## 7. Discussion

Prior to embarking on the analysis, it has to be made clear that most Muslims cogitate the Qur'an as the sacred text of Islam that is beyond the pale of translation. According to Hassan Mustapha (2001, p. 200), the status attached to the Qur'an stems from the belief that it encompasses, verbatim, the untranslatable Word of God, as publicized to prophet Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel. The Qur'an itself directly refers to this limitless power: "Had We made this Quran descend upon a mountain, thou wouldst have seen it humbled, rent asunder by the fear of God" (59:21). Therefore, we think that translating a religious book such as the Qur'an



into English language is an overawing mission, for it involves turning over the absolute and the infinite by means of the virtual and finite.

For example, Arberry (1996, p. 24) states that “the rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Koran are so characteristic, so powerful, so highly emotive, that any version whatsoever is bound in the nature of things to be but a poor copy of the glittering splendour of the original.” Also, Pickthall (1994, p. iii) states that “The Quran cannot be translated. That is the belief of the traditional Sheikhs and of the present writer.” Haleem (1999) states that at the center of Qur’anic untranslatability lies its continual thematic and syntactic alternations known as (iltifat) as well as the ambivalence of the Qur’anic language. The following is a review of some semantic and syntactic difficulties in translating the Qur’an into English.

### 7.1 Considering the syntactic deviations in the Qur’an

This section provides some excerpts/verses which are difficult to translate. This is, in part, because of how the translation is performed. Still, the author considers providing the original excerpt and underneath the two selected translations. Then, under the literal explanation, the author will suggest his version of the translation: one that includes the syntactic, semantic, and/or pragmatic features of the original. This would improve substantially the readability of the excerpts and would add to the analysis of their two translations.

Translating syntactic shift or “iltifat” means imitating the nearest equivalence of SL. Iltifat is also known as grammatical shift that refers to cases where the Qur’anic text makes strange grammatical shift in point of view or addressee for no ostensible reason. The author argues that it is intentional and that it makes the Qur’an more difficult to translate. In fact, it is one of the Qur’an’s stylistic aspects; iltifat has certain distinctive and unique characteristics in it. Such syntactic changes or alternations between tenses or persons can be problematic to translate because they defy the standards of human speech. A famous example of this syntactic alternation can be found in Surat al-Kawthar.

- إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ (الكوثر (١٠٨:٢))

- Arberry: “Surely We have given thee abundance; so pray unto thy Lord and sacrifice”.
- Hilali and Khan: “Verily, We have granted you (O Muhammad (Peace be upon him)) Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradise); Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only).”

In this above verse, both translators face the syntactic shift as Allah begins by speaking in the first person saying “We”, but then He unexpectedly switches to the third person by saying: “Worship your Lord”, when we would expect Him to say “Worship Me”. Also, abundance and the river in paradise is part of the good that Allah has given to His Messenger. Therefore, both translators have overlooked that all sayings about the meaning of the “Kawthar” are particular aspects of the whole, which is the copious good in the two worlds: here and hereafter.

- فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ لَنُهْلِكَنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ (إبراهيم (١٣:١٤))

- Arberry: “Then did their Lord reveal unto them: 'We will surely destroy the evildoers.’”
- Hilali and Khan: “So their Lord inspired them: "Truly, We shall destroy the Zalimun (polytheists, disbelievers and wrong-doers.).”

Another example can be originated in Surat Ibrahim (14:13). The shift that both translators face here lies in the heavenly voice from third-person singular to first-person plural, which carries the reality of the celestial justice into an instant relief. Dangling pronouns make both translators overlook the meaning that those who prefer the life of worldly life to the hereafter will turn out as losers in the next life.

- الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (الفاتحة (١:٢))

- Hilali and Khan: “All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind and jinns) ”.
- Arberry: “Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being.”

- إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (الفاتحة (١:٥))

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: “You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help.”
- Arberry: “Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succour.”

In the third and fourth connected examples above, the essence of the shift of iltifat can be seen in the transition in the pronouns such as ‘Thee’, ‘You’, ‘we’ etc. which are words that are deictic because their referents can differ depending on speech contexts. In the case of shift above, there are changes of speech acts from one style to another. However, the syntactic change or *iltifat* in the first four verses (first two sentences) of the opening chapter speak of Allah as an unequalled third person, whereas the next verses bring Allah into an instant association with human beings. This sudden deviation from divine otherworldliness to a divine state of being

inherent or exclusively existing within something is even more problematic and dramatic in the two translations. For both translators, who are supposed to have mastered Arabic and English languages, have missed to translate it in a way that fully captures the vivid effects this sudden deviation in the original Arabic can cause.

- إِذْ جَاءُوكُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ  
بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا (الأحزاب (١٠:٣٣))

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: *“When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes grew wild and the hearts reached to the throats”*.
- Arberry: *“When they came against you from above you and from below you, and when your eyes swerved and your hearts reached your throats,”*

In the fifth example above, the shift is in the use of tense, which is a clear syntactic deviation that both translators have encountered in translating most of this verse tenses. As they conveyed literally, they need to make tense shifts to transfer the intended meaning to their target readers.

## 7.2 Understanding the semantic meanings of idioms

Semantic deviation occurs when an idiom has many different meanings. For both translators, idioms in the Qur'an form a real problem as they are because of the complexity of the Arabic language to non-native speakers. The challenge may be greater for them since they do not speak Arabic and because of their inability to cognize the true meanings of most of the changes in Arabic. Still, though the two translators may not be native speakers of Arabic but noting that this does not render them unable to understand true semantic meanings. Therefore, I would limit the discussion to showing the semantic issues, the proficiency issue or the matter of translating the selected religious texts.

To appreciate the Qur'anic verses, a translator must refer to well-known references of interpretations (exegesis) to understand the deep and surface meanings of the Qur'anic text. Our first example here is from Surat al-Nahl (The Bees) (16:7)

- إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ (النحل (٧:١٦))

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: *“could not reach except with great trouble to yourselves.”*

- Arberry: *"never would reach, excepting with great distress."*

The two translated Surat l-naḥl (The Bees) (16:7) as (Tr1: with great trouble) and (Tr2: with great distress). The two translators did not do well in communicating the meanings of the Qur'anic idioms here into English. For idioms such as distress and trouble in this sense may refer to a "psychological pain" or "sadness" or a "problem". Therefore, it does not fit the meaning of an Arabic idiom such as "with great efforts".

- فَلَا صَدَقَ وَلَا صَلَّى (القيامة (٧٥:٣١))

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: *"So he (the disbeliever) neither believed (in this Quran, in the Message of Muhammad SAW) nor prayed!"*
- Arberry: *"For he confirmed it not, and did not pray."*

In the second example above, there is a confusion in translating the meanings of the Qur'anic words, which lies in Surat al-Qiyamah (Resurrection). Due to some flaws in their Arabic language, as non-native speakers, Arberry, Hilali and Khan use long descriptive comments or detailed comments; however, such comments do and did not occur in the Qur'an itself. That leads eventually to interrupt the original flow of the Qur'anic verse. Still, Arberry tries to fully transfer the meanings of the Qur'anic words without deficiency or addition. What is significant here is that not all mistakes are due to a misconception about the Islamic religion, and perhaps the large number of these confirm the need for reaching a full translation without errors.

### 7.3 Using ancient words and biblical terms to render Arabic ones

The two translators use ancient words and Biblical terms to render Arabic ones. For examples, the word "God" is taken to denote the word "Allah" in all translations. They use the word "God" as non-native translators to refer to divinity. However, the word "God" is not the collective word for the meaning of divinity in Arabic language. The use of the word "God" can cause some misperception among non-Muslim readers as Arberry makes the word "God" look as if it is "Allah" for the Muslims. We believe that the name should stay unaffected from the SL (source language) to the TL (target language). In this way no cultural switch can occur.

As a rule, Newmark (1988) believes that people's names should not be translated when their names have no implications in the text. Still, both translators commit

errors in translating names of prophets. It must be said here that all names denote proper nouns and not abstract in their meaning. Regardless of any particular context; therefore, both translators should not have used the biblical terms to render Arabic ones with all of these names. Still, it is possible the translators did so to highlight the continuity of divine revelations starting from the old and new testaments to Qur'an. They might have wanted to convey the idea that these three scriptures refer to and talk about the same persons (prophets). In fact, it is not clear why both translators adopt the biblical sources for these names.

**Table 1:**

*Names used by the two translations of the Qur'an*

Arabic name	Hilali and Khan	Arberry
ادم	Adam	Adam
إبراهيم	Ibrahim (Abraham)	Abraham
موسى	Musa (Moses)	Moses
عيسى	Isa (Jesus)	Jesus
اسماعيل	Isma'il	Ishmael
يونس	Yunus (Jonah)	Jonah
يوسف	Jusuf (Joseph)	Joseph
يعقوب	Ya'qub (Jacob)	Jacob
اسحاق	Ishaq (Isaac)	Isaac
نوح	Nuh (Noah)	Noah
داود	Dawud (David)	David
أيوب	Ayyub (Job)	Job
هارون	Harun (Aaron)	Aaron
هود	Hood (Hud)	Hood

We believe that those biblical names such as Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, Jesus, Job, Jonah and Aaron, must not be copied or reproduced as Synatic equivalents for Qur'anic ones in the target text. In addition, insofar as Arabic names in the source text, transliteration and transcription may be used for translating them as of personal proper names.

#### 7.4 Pragmatic Ambivalence in The Qur'anic Arabic Language

Ambivalence refers to the wide range of interpretations resulting from the multiple meanings of a religious text or verse (i.e. a verse that has more than one possible pragmatic force) (Thomas, 2013). That is, verses can be vulnerable to manifold analyses that cannot be translated correctly since these follow an atomistic

approach. In this point, we will locate three categories of pragmatic ambivalence. First, we tackle plurivalence, that is, it indicates the linguistic trend that a specific expression of the speaker carries two or more of the speaker's intentions. Occasionally the speaker's intentions may be wholly different. The second is multivalence, which denotes the linguistic trend that a particular expression of the speaker transfers several of his/her intentions. The third is conditional bivalent act, which mostly discusses the linguistic trend that a definite expression of the speaker can express another speaker's intention as long as the spoken conditions are probable (He, 2000).

The First example is prefaced letters or disconnected letters or Huroof-e-Muqatta'at such as Alif Laam Meem, Yaseen, Ha-meem, etc in the Qur'an which represent a clearer case of plurivalence ambivalence. For most Arabic theorists consider them as a paradigmatic case of enigmatic graphemes. Examples are shown below:

- عسق (الشورى (٤٢:٢))

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: 'Ain-Sin-Qaf. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Quran, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings].
- Arberry: Ain Sin Qaf

The meaning and purpose of the above letters (Ain-Sin-Qaf) take a variety of explanations offered by Muslim scholars. Tabatabai, (1973) believes that these are the specialties of the Qur'an and no other divine book has them. Yet the chapters or surahs that share these letters such as Ain-Sin-Qaf or Ha Waa Meem (plural of Haa Meem) contain certain commonality of subjects and contexts that we do not find in other chapters.

Other theorists consider that these letters as abbreviations for certain sentences, words, symbols and names of Allah. Al Murtaza (1992) explains the value of these letters considering Alif stands for one, Laam, for thirty, Meem forty, Saad, ninety, etc. If we put the four letters together, it comes to 161. Qurtubi (2003) interpret these letters as broken names of God in the Qur'an. For example, Alif Laam Ra and Haa Meem and Nu:n make Al- Rahman. Zamakhshari (1966) has similar opinions considering them as special names of certain chapters in the Qur'an.

The second example is about pragmatic multivalence.

- وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (الأنبياء (٢١:١٠٧))

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: *"And We have sent you (O Muhammad SAW) not but as a mercy for the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists)."*
- Arberry: *"We have not sent thee, save as a mercy unto all beings."*

These two variant examples reveal the way in which the Arabic word "rahmah" (mercy) may be understood as modifier either to the pronoun "you" or to the verb "to send." Both are compelling semantic interpretations. However, while the Arabic text allocates readers to comprehend both that the dispatching of the Prophet was accomplished out of mercy and that he himself is a mercy; the interpreter must choose to bound the polyvalent Arabic verse to a distinct meaning or render a dual translation that can transfer both meanings. In such examples, translation not only constrains the language of the Qur'an, but also limits the manifold religious inferences of the text.

The third example is about bivalent illocutionary act.

- اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ كَانَ اُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلّٰهِ (النحل ١٢٠:١٦)

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: *"Verily, Ibrahim (Abraham) was an Ummah (a leader having all the good righteous qualities), or a nation, obedient to Allah,"*
- Arberry: *"Surely, Abraham was a nation obedient unto God, a man of pure faith."*

Both translators use literal translation to show the meaning of this particular verse. Nonetheless, their translations are not cordial. For they do not show the polyvalent meaning of word (Ummah), which denotes (beliefs), not (a community) as they have confirmed. In this respect, the translator must be conscious and cognize the phenomenon of ambivalence in the Qur'an to render better the envisioned meaning of the texts. Still, though I have stated that both translators use literal translation in many cases to show the meaning of the particular verses, their translations are not cordial. For they do not show the polyvalent meaning of word (Ummah), which denotes (beliefs), not (a community) as they have confirmed. In this respect, the translator must be conscious and cognize the phenomenon of ambivalence in the Qur'an to render better the envisioned meaning of the texts. The effects of not being cordial causes the Arabic language or as used in the Qur'an to be more indirect language, particularly in some contexts. It is a matter of face, politeness, cognitive and/or sociolinguistic factors.

## 7.5 Metaphorical Expressions in the Quran

Metaphor occurs when two different things are brought together depending on the relation of meaning between literal and figurative senses. There are several types of metaphor in the Qur'an.

- وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَى فَارِغًا (القصص (٢٨:١٠))

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: *"And the heart of the mother of Musa (Moses) became empty [from every thought, except the thought of Musa (Moses)]."*
- Arberry: *"On the morrow the heart of Moses' mother became empty."*

For above-mentioned examples, Arberry discounted the meaning of the metaphor in this particular verse - that Moses mother was no longer engaged in anything except what she had heard that Moses was under the attention of Pharaoh's family. Consequently, his literal translation of the metaphorical term here is totally out of context. For the addressee may not understand the literal translation "On the morrow the heart of Moses mother became empty". The metaphorical term in the above verse signifies that the Moses' mother became thoughtful with nothing but Moses.

- يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ (يوسف (١٢:٩))

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: *"The favour of your father may be given to you alone."*
- Arberry: *"Your father's face may be free for you."*

Arberry's literal translation of the metaphor above is out of context. For the addressee may not grasp the literal translation of "your father's face may be free for you". The previous phrase entails that the care of the Prophet Jacob will be forwarded to his sons after killing Joseph, who received more attention from his father.

- وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ (الاسراء (١٧:٢٩))

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: *"And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift)."*
- Arberry: *"And keep not thy hand chained to thy neck, nor outspread it widespread altogether."*



The above translations are hard to read and do not convey the meaning of the original text. To correct the literal translation, namely, the metaphor of (stinginess) and (spending), both translations should run as follows: And be neither miserly nor extravagant.

- وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ (البقرة ٩٣:٢)

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: “*And their hearts absorbed (the worship of) the calf because of their disbelief.*”
- Arberry: “*And they were made to drink the Calf in their hearts for their unbelief.*”

Though the above translation is not literal, there is a big change in meaning. For the foreign readers of both translations, these translations may seem meaningful and the metaphor is clear—far from it. In fact, both are awkward, showing the complexity of fully grasping the secrets of the Arabic language in general, and fully appreciating the Qur’anic verses. For the real meaning for this verse must be that their hearts were soaked with the love of the calf.

- وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ (الفرقان ٢٧:٢٥)

- Mohsin Hilali and Khan: “*And (remember) the Day when the Zalim (wrong-doer, oppressor, polytheist, etc.) will bite at his hands*”.
- Arberry: “*Upon the day the evildoer shall bite his hands.*”

Hilali and Khan opt that the proper way to translate the above metaphor by explaining or paraphrasing the translation to make it more all-embracing for the target readers. However, both produce an equivocal translation, especially with the use of the indefinite orientation of biting the hands to express the feeling of the remorse upon that day.

## 8. Conclusions

We have investigated the syntactic and semantic deviations in two famous translations of the Qur’an. From the investigation, we find out that there are different kinds of semantic deviations such as ambivalence, idioms, metaphors and the multiple meanings of other different tropes. Secondly, syntactic deviations in the two translations mostly contribute to shifts in tense and pronouns as well as the different meanings of the verses themselves.

However, little did the two translators consider the impacts that the syntactic and semantic cultures do on meaningful interpretations of the Qur'an. For both translators were misled by their syntactic and semantic abilities of the Qur'an, and were driven by their excessive esteem of the sound rhythm in the Qur'an to make their translations, which proved a failure. Our analysis also shows that both translators aim at communicating religious messages without reflecting the peculiarities and semantic structures of the Qur'anic discourse.

The findings reveal the obvious distortion and manipulation of syntactic, lexical and pragmatic items in different verses. It illustrates that how the different syntactic, lexical and pragmatic choices of translators have altered the meanings of the source text of the Qur'an. Their overemphasis in the use of contemporary language is noticeably an erroneous course; because it makes the religious verses lose their articulacy and beauty. Moreover, both translators use the same strategy of syntactic equivalents for translation of all personal names in the Qur'an. We believe that both translators should use transcription and transliteration procedures when deciphering personal names

Therefore, translators should work on correcting the syntactic errors by attaching the essential illustrative notes or annotations, and by maintaining the level of literary language as much as possible. We believe that such issues should lead to a much concentration when reading the Qur'an. For the translators of the Qur'an must fully understand its semantic verses via reading the Qur'an as the discourse of the eternal or the living divine word. That is why we have suggested some ways of enhancing the field of Qur'anic translation with a view to reproducing adequate translation both in syntactic and semantic contents. This of course must be in concurrence with the extent to which Qur'anic texts are translatable which clearly depends on the available exegesis and the type of text involved

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