



Semantic and Exegetical Variation in the English Translation of Qur'anic Expressions of Joy and Glad Tidings: A Comparative Study of Farḥ and Bushrā

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Abstract

The current study aims at identifying the translation procedures of happy emotion expressions in the Holy Quran, specifically focusing on the Arabic terms farḥ (فرح) and bushrā (بشرى), and their renditions into English across eight widely recognized translations. The emotion of happiness in Arabic is not monolithic; rather, it is expressed through a rich and nuanced lexical network that includes *farah*, *suroor*, *bushra*, *haboor*, *nadrah*, and *ghibtah*, each carrying distinct theological, psychological, and contextual implications. The structural, metalinguistic, and cultural differences between Arabic and English pose significant challenges for translators, particularly when rendering divine communication where every lexical choice carries potential theological weight. The effects of certain stylistic nuances cannot be achieved without disrupting the target language's lexis or syntactic order. In such cases, more complex translation procedures must be employed to convey the intended meaning of the source text accurately. Indirect translation procedures, while they may appear quite modern or even unusual, allow translators to exercise strict control over the reliability and accuracy of their work. The cultural and religious system embedded in the Quranic source language operates at a high level of context, prioritizing positive emotions, positive thinking, and positive expressions even in descriptions of divine mercy and reward. This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method, analyzing five selected Quranic verses (10:58, 30:36, 3:170, 39:45, 16:58) alongside their translations by Sahih International, Pickthal, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Sarwar, Khan, Maulana, Rashad, and Sherali. The theoretical framework is based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) translation procedures, supported by the cultural scripts theory of Wierzbicka (1999) and classical Quranic exegesis (tafsir) from Ibn Kathir, Al-Sa'di, Al-Jalalayn, and others. The findings reveal that modulation and equivalence are the most frequently employed procedures, allowing translators to shift from generic English equivalents such as "rejoice" to more context-sensitive renditions including "happy," "pleased," "joyful," "glad," and "glad tidings." The study concludes that translating positive emotions in Quranic contexts requires a delicate balance between semantic fidelity, exegetical accuracy, and target



language naturalness, with oblique translation procedures proving more effective than direct procedures in most cases.

Keywords—culture, emotion, farḥ, bushrā, Quranic translation, translation procedure, modulation, equivalence

التباين الدلالي والتفسيري في ترجمة التعبيرات القرآنية إلى اللغة الإنكليزية الدالة على الفرح والبشرى: تحليل مقارنة لكلمتي فرح وبشرى

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الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد إجراءات الترجمة الخاصة بتعبير العاطفة السعيدة في القرآن الكريم، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على المصطلحين العربيين فرح وبشرى، وترجمتهما إلى اللغة الإنكليزية عبر ثماني ترجمات معتمدة وواسعة الانتشار. إن مفهوم السعادة في اللغة العربية ليس أحاديًا، بل يُعبّر عنه من خلال شبكة معجمية غنية ومتعددة الدلالات تشمل: فرح، سرور، بشرى، حبور، نضرة، وغبطة، حيث يحمل كل منها أبعادًا لاهوتية ونفسية وسياقية متميزة.

وتُشكل الفروق البنيوية، وما فوق اللغوية، والثقافية بين اللغتين العربية والإنكليزية تحديات كبيرة أمام المترجمين، لا سيما عند ترجمة النص القرآني بوصفه خطابًا إلهيًا، حيث ينطوي كل اختيار معجمي على دلالة عقديّة محتملة. كما أن بعض الخصائص الأسلوبية الدقيقة لا يمكن نقلها دون الإخلال بالمعجم أو بالبنية النحوية للغة الهدف، مما يستدعي اللجوء إلى إجراءات ترجمة أكثر تعقيدًا لضمان نقل المعنى المقصود بدقة.

وتُتيح إجراءات الترجمة غير المباشرة، رغم ما قد يبدو عليها من حداثة أو غرابة، للمترجمين قدرًا أكبر من التحكم في موثوقية ودقة العمل الترجمي. ويعمل النظام الثقافي والديني المتجذر في لغة النص القرآني ضمن سياق عالٍ، يُعلي من شأن المشاعر الإيجابية والتفكير الإيجابي والتعبيرات الإيجابية، حتى في سياقات الحديث عن الرحمة الإلهية والثواب تعتمد هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، حيث تم تحليل خمس آيات قرآنية مختارة (10:58، 30:36، 3:170، 39:45، 16:58). إلى جانب ترجماتها لدى كل من: صحيح العالمي وبيكتهال و بوسف علي وشاكر وسروار وخان ومولانا ورشيد وشير علي. ويستند الإطار النظري إلى إجراءات الترجمة لدى فايناي و داربلنت (2000). مدعومًا بنظرية النصوص الثقافية ل ويزربيك (1999). إضافة إلى كتب التفسير مثل تفسير ابن كثير، والسعدي، والجلالين، وغيرهم. وتُظهر النتائج أن إجراءات التعديل والتكافؤ هما الأكثر استخدامًا، حيث يتيحان للمترجمين الانتقال من مكافئات إنكليزية عامة إلى صيغ أكثر ملاءمة للسياق مثل فرح وسرور وغبطة وبشرى. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن ترجمة المشاعر الإيجابية في السياق القرآني تتطلب توازنًا دقيقًا بين الأمانة الدلالية، والدقة التفسيرية، وطبيعية اللغة الهدف، مع كون إجراءات الترجمة غير المباشرة أكثر فاعلية من الإجراءات المباشرة في معظم الحالات.



الكلمات المفتاحية الثقافة، العاطفة، فرح، بشري، ترجمة القرآن الكريم، إجراءات الترجمة،
التعديل، التكافؤ

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotion is the human's complex expression involving feelings, environment, desires, psychological changes, and self-control (Wierzbicka, 2010). The emotions fundamentally are interests, joy, wonder, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shame, and sin (Wierzbicka, 1992). It is whatever stated by humans must be based on certain emotions. The study therefore on the translation of emotion is very important, and how important the study on it can be seen from both a philosophical rationality and an empirical point of view.

Regarding the philosophical rationality, the basic nature of research on emotion translation is motivated by the epistemological aspects of transferring meaning from the Source Language (SL) to the Target Language (TL). The meaning or message to be conveyed can be communicated through language or through a sign system. The transfer of meaning is a fundamental principle of translation. Translation involves form, function, and meaning through semantic structure. The meaning is transferred and must be preserved; however, the form can be changed to suit the target language's linguistic and cultural norms. Larson (1998) argued that translation is defined by studying lexicons, grammatical structures, communication situations, and the cultural context of the SL. The translator observes the text in the SL and seeks its equivalent in the TL. The main and most basic task is how to re-express the meaning using appropriate lexicon and grammatical structure in accordance with the cultural context of the target audience.

The study of emotion translation has been approached empirically by several researchers. Sumaranama (2015) conducted research on emotions in translation and found that direct and oblique procedures were applied evenly to the translation of negative emotions. That research proved that translation studies and semantics are closely related and support each other in the analysis of emotional terms. Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) analysis, in particular, made a significant contribution to understanding the lexicon of emotions. The NSM approach, developed primarily by Wierzbicka (1986; 1990; 1992; 1994; 1995; 1999; 2003; 2009; 2010), demonstrated that translation is not merely about searching for equivalence but also about conveying cognitive scenarios and



understanding the effects of translation choices on the resulting text. However, previous research has largely focused on negative emotions or on non-religious texts. The present study aims to complete and extend previous translation research by identifying the translation procedures applied to positive emotions, specifically the expressions of happiness (farḥ and bushrā) in selected verses of the Holy Quran.

The Holy Quran, as the central religious text of Islam, presents unique challenges for translators. Every word carries theological significance, and the emotional expressions within it are not merely descriptive but often carry prescriptive and evaluative dimensions. Positive emotions such as joy, happiness, and glad tidings are frequently mentioned in contexts of divine mercy, reward in Paradise, and the spiritual state of believers. Translating these emotions into English requires not only linguistic competence but also deep understanding of Quranic exegesis (tafsir) and the cultural-linguistic worldview of classical Arabic. The present study addresses this gap by systematically analyzing how eight major English translations render specific Arabic happiness terms across five distinct Quranic contexts. (Parallel English Quran .2004)

II. METHODS

This research method used a qualitative descriptive paradigm. The research was designed as translation research that views translation as a product. The problems and the focus of the research were determined in the research proposal before the researcher explored the data (Sutopo, 2002). This approach ensures that the analysis remains focused and systematic.

The data were collected from eight widely used English translations of the Holy Quran. These translations represent diverse schools of thought, historical periods, and translation strategies. The selected translations include those by Sahih International (a contemporary Saudi-approved translation), Pickthal (1930, known for its archaic poetic style), Yusuf Ali (1934, widely used in the English-speaking Muslim world), Shakir (1980s, known for its literal approach), Sarwar (1981, a Shia translation), Khan (1990s, published by Darussalam with extensive commentary), Maulana (1917, by Muhammad Ali), Rashad (Khalifa, 1980s), and Sherali (1920s). This range allows for a comprehensive understanding of how different translators approach the same source language items.



The research focused on positive emotions expressing happiness in the SL with reference to the TL. Specifically, the study targeted the Arabic terms *farḥ* (فرح) and *bushrā* (بشرى) and their various derivatives and cognates in five selected Quranic verses. The selection of verses was based on the following criteria: (a) the verse contains an explicit emotion word related to happiness or glad tidings, (b) the verse has been discussed in classical tafsir literature, (c) the verse presents variation across different English translations, and (d) the verse covers different contexts (divine mercy, martyrdom, disbelievers' reactions, and social customs). The five verses selected are:

1. Surah Yunus (10:58) — commanding believers to rejoice in God's bounty and mercy
2. Surah Ar-Rum (30:36) — describing human reaction to experiencing divine mercy
3. Surah Al-Imran (3:170) — describing the state of martyrs in Paradise
4. Surah Az-Zumar (39:45) — describing the reaction of disbelievers to the mention of false gods
5. Surah An-Nahl (16:58) — describing the pre-Islamic Arab reaction to news of a daughter's birth

In order to identify the translation procedures applied in each case, the theory applied in the present article was Vinay and Darbelnet (2000). This framework distinguishes between two main categories of translation procedures: direct translation (borrowing, calque, and literal translation) and oblique translation (transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation). Direct translation procedures are applicable when structural and conceptual parallelism exists between the SL and TL. Oblique procedures become necessary when such parallelism is absent or when direct procedures would produce unnatural or misleading results in the TL.

The analysis was further supported by the theory of cultural scripts developed by Wierzbicka (1994) and Goddard (1997, 2000, 2004). Cultural scripts are a method of articulating cultural norms, values, and practices in simple, cross-translatable terms. This approach allows the researcher to explicate the meaning of emotion terms in a way that is not tied to any particular language's lexical categories. The concept of something good happened as the cognitive scenario underlying happiness was adapted from Wierzbicka (1999), who argued that positive emotions across languages share certain universal components while also exhibiting culture-specific nuances.



Additionally, the study integrates classical Quranic exegesis (tafsir) as a validation tool. The interpretations of Ibn Kathir, Al-Sa'di, Al-Waseet, Al-Baghawi, Al-Jalalayn, and Al-Muyassar were consulted to determine the precise meaning of each Arabic emotion term in its context. This exegetical grounding ensures that the translation analysis is not merely linguistic but also theologically informed.

Vinay and Darbelnet (2000: 84-93) stated that translation procedures can be divided into two main categories: (a) direct translation, which includes borrowing, calque, and literal translation, and (b) oblique translation, which includes transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

There are several words of emotion in Arabic that express the concept of something good happens, which is the cognitive scenario underlying happiness. One of the most important of these is *farḥ* (فرح). However, *farḥ* is not the only term. Arabic, due to its rich morphological system and its role as the language of the Quran, possesses a remarkably nuanced lexicon for positive emotions. The following table presents the main Arabic happiness terms along with their meanings based on classical Arabic lexicons and tafsir literature:

Arabic Term	Transliteration	Meaning based on classical sources
فرح	<i>farḥ</i>	Joy associated with the blessing of God or arrogance with the blessing; heart joy; praiseworthy when accompanied by gratitude, blameworthy when accompanied by arrogance
سرور	<i>suroor</i>	Deep, quiet joy and peace of mind; inner contentment
بشرى	<i>bushrā</i>	Joy resulting from hearing good news; glad tidings
حبور	<i>haboor</i>	Great joy apparent on the face and in the heart
نضرة	<i>nadrah</i>	Radiance of the face, especially in the Hereafter; brightness of the face from joy and satisfaction



Arabic Term	Transliteration	Meaning based on classical sources
غبطى	<i>ghibtah</i>	Tranquility, comfort, and deep heartfelt joy; a state of wishing for a similar blessing without wanting it to be taken from others

These Arabic emotion words can be translated into English using a variety of lexical items. The emotion of happy in English, which serves as a general cover term for positive affect, is often used as a translation equivalent. However, as will be demonstrated, the English equivalents include: delight, blessed, fortunate, joyful, rejoice, pleased, glad, exultation, merriment, boastful, bliss, glad tidings, good news, radiant, glowing, brightness, radiance, pleasure, amusement, diversion, cheerfulness, and others. This range of equivalents indicates that no single English word captures the full semantic range of the Arabic happiness lexicon.

The following sections analyze each of the five selected Quranic verses in detail, identifying the translation procedures employed by different translators and evaluating their accuracy based on linguistic, contextual, and exegetical criteria.

A. Analysis of Verse 1: Surah Yunus (10:58)

Arabic Text (Quran 10:58):

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

Sahih International Translation:

"Say, 'In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy - in that let them rejoice; it is better than what they accumulate.'"

This verse is addressed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), instructing him to tell people that God's bounty (fadl) and mercy (rahmah) are the proper objects of rejoicing. The verse contrasts this spiritual joy with the accumulation of material wealth, declaring that rejoicing in God's grace is far better than hoarding worldly possessions.



The following presents how eight different translators rendered the key emotion word *falyafrahū* (فَلْيَفْرَحُوا):

Translator	Rendition of فَلْيَفْرَحُوا
Khan	let them rejoice
Maulana	they should rejoice
Pickthal	let them rejoice
Rashad	they shall rejoice
Sarwar	to be happy
Shakir	they should rejoice
Sherali	let them rejoice
Yusuf Ali	let them rejoice

Discussion of Verse 1:

The analysis of this verse reveals that seven out of the eight translators (87.5%) rendered the Arabic *falyafrahū* (فَلْيَفْرَحُوا) as "rejoice" in its various grammatical forms (let them rejoice, they should rejoice, they shall rejoice). Only one translator, Sarwar, used a different rendition: "to be happy."

The dominance of "rejoice" as a translation equivalent suggests that the translators perceive a direct lexical correspondence between the Arabic *farḥ* and the English "rejoice." From the perspective of Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) framework, this can be classified as equivalence, which is an oblique translation procedure. Equivalence occurs when different languages describe the same situation using different stylistic or structural means. In this case, both *farḥ* and "rejoice" refer to an emotional state of joy, but they operate within different linguistic and cultural systems. Equivalence is particularly common in the translation of idioms, proverbs, and emotional expressions where a word-for-word translation would be unnatural.

The use of "rejoice" is appropriate because it captures the active, expressive dimension of *farḥ* in this context. The verse commands people to actively rejoice (*falyafrahū* is an imperative form) in God's bounty and



mercy. "Rejoice" carries a similar sense of active, outward expression of joy, often in a religious or celebratory context. This makes it a suitable equivalence.

Sarwar's choice of "to be happy" represents a different procedure: modulation. Modulation is an oblique translation procedure that involves a change in point of view, perspective, or category of thought without changing the underlying meaning. By rendering *falyafrahū* as "to be happy," Sarwar shifts from an active, imperative form ("let them rejoice") to a stative, descriptive form ("to be happy"). While the meaning is not fundamentally altered, the modulation changes the pragmatic force of the verse. The imperative sense of command is weakened, and the verse becomes more descriptive of a state rather than prescriptive of an action. Nevertheless, "happy" is a natural and accessible English equivalent, and the shift does not constitute an error.

According to the classical exegesis of this verse, Ibn Kathir explains that *farḥ* here is praiseworthy because it is *farḥ* in God's bounty (the Quran) and mercy (Islam). Al-Sa'di similarly states that this *farḥ* is not the blameworthy type of joy that leads to arrogance and forgetfulness of God, but rather a joyful gratitude that draws one closer to God. Al-Jalalayn notes that the verse distinguishes between rejoicing in God's grace (praiseworthy) and rejoicing in worldly accumulation (blameworthy).

The cognitive scenario underlying *farḥ* in this verse can be explicated using Wierzbicka's (1999) cultural scripts approach:

People think like this:

When I say something to other people,

It is good if these people think that I feel something good

It is not good if these people think that I feel something bad

Something good happened to someone,

Some good things happened to this person,

This person wanted things like this to happen,

This person does not want anything else now.

When this person thinks this,



This person feels something good because this person felt something like this.

In this verse, the "something good" is specifically God's bounty (the Quran as guidance) and His mercy (Islam as a way of life). The command to rejoice indicates that this feeling is not merely spontaneous but also a religious duty. This distinguishes farḥ in the Quranic context from everyday happiness, which may have no moral dimension.

B. Analysis of Verse 2: Surah Ar-Rum (30:36)

Arabic Text (Quran 30:36):

وَإِذَا أذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا

Sahih International Translation:

"And when We give the people a taste of mercy, they rejoice therein."

This verse describes a common human pattern: when people experience divine mercy (such as health, wealth, or relief from hardship), they react with joy. However, the verse continues (in the following clause, not quoted here) to describe how they despair when hardship befalls them due to their own actions. The verse thus critiques the instability of human emotional response, which is tied to immediate circumstances rather than to lasting faith.

The following table presents the renditions of fariḥū (فَرِحُوا) by eight translators:

Translator	Rendition of فَرِحُوا
Khan	rejoice
Maulana	rejoice
Pickthal	rejoice
Rashad	rejoice
Sarwar	are happy



Translator	Rendition of فرحوا
Shakir	rejoice
Sherali	rejoice
Yusuf Ali	exult

Discussion of Verse 2:

The analysis of this verse shows that six out of eight translators (75%) used "rejoice" as the equivalent for *fariḥū*. Sarwar used "are happy," and Yusuf Ali used "exult."

The majority choice of "rejoice" again represents the procedure of equivalence. The context here is descriptive rather than imperative: the verse describes what people do when they experience mercy (they rejoice). "Rejoice" functions naturally in this descriptive context as well.

Sarwar's "are happy" represents modulation. By using the stative verb "are happy" rather than the active verb "rejoice," Sarwar shifts the emphasis from the outward expression of joy to the internal state. This modulation is not incorrect, but it may slightly alter the nuance. The Arabic *fariḥū* describes an active emotional reaction, not merely a passive state. "Rejoice" captures the active dimension more accurately.

Yusuf Ali's choice of "exult" is particularly interesting. "Exult" means to show or feel a lively or triumphant joy, often as a result of success or victory. The word carries connotations of celebration, triumph, and sometimes boastfulness. In contemporary English, "exult" is less common than "rejoice" and is often associated with formal or literary contexts. From a procedural perspective, "exult" can be classified as modulation because it shifts the intensity and quality of the emotion. While *farḥ* in this verse is a natural human reaction to mercy, it does not necessarily imply triumph or boastfulness. In fact, the verse's continuation (which describes how the same people despair when hardship strikes) suggests that their joy is transient and superficial, not deep or triumphant. Therefore, "exult" may be too strong a choice. A more neutral equivalent such as "rejoice" or "are happy" would be more accurate.

The classical exegesis of this verse provides additional insight. Al-Sa'di explains that human beings naturally feel joy when they experience blessings, but this joy becomes blameworthy when it leads to forgetfulness of God and arrogance. Al-Baghawi notes that the verse



criticizes those whose faith depends on circumstances: they rejoice when things go well and despair when things go wrong. The farḥ described here is therefore not the praiseworthy farḥ of gratitude but a morally neutral or potentially blameworthy farḥ of attachment to worldly conditions.

The cognitive scenario for farḥ in this verse is similar to that in Verse 1, but with a crucial difference: the evaluation is not necessarily positive. Wierzbicka (1999) notes that farḥ can be positive or negative depending on its cause and consequences. The cultural scripts approach allows for this flexibility:

People think like this:

When I say something to other people,

It is good if these people think that I feel something good

It is not good if these people think that I feel something bad

Something good happened to someone,

This person feels something good because of this,

This person may think about who caused this good thing

If this person does not think about this,

It is not good

In the context of Verse 2, the people rejoice in the mercy but do not necessarily attribute it to God or respond with gratitude. Their joy is therefore incomplete and unstable.

C. Analysis of Verse 3: Surah Al-Imran (3:170)

Arabic Text (Quran 3:170):

فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ

Sahih International Translation:

"Rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty."



This verse describes the state of martyrs (those killed in the way of God) after their death. According to the verse, they are not dead but alive with their Lord, provided for. They are *farihīna* (rejoicing) in what God has given them of His bounty, and they also rejoice for the sake of their fellow believers who have not yet joined them, assuring them that they have no fear or grief.

The following table presents the renditions of *farihīna* (فَرِحِينَ) by seven translators:

Translator	Rendition of فَرِحِينَ
Maulana	Rejoicing
Pickthal	Jubilant (are they) ... rejoicing
Rashad	Rejoicing
Sarwar	Pleased
Shakir	Rejoicing
Sherali	Jubilant ... rejoicing
Yusuf Ali	Rejoice

Discussion of Verse 3:

The analysis of this verse shows that six out of seven translators (approximately 86%) used forms of "rejoice" or "rejoicing" as the equivalent for *farihīna*. Only one translator, Sarwar, used a different rendition: "pleased."

The dominance of "rejoicing" again represents the procedure of equivalence. The context here is descriptive and continuous: the martyrs are in an ongoing state of joy. The English present participle "rejoicing" captures this durative aspect effectively.

However, Sarwar's choice of "pleased" represents an important and potentially more accurate modulation. The shift from "rejoicing" to "pleased" changes the point of view from outward expression to internal state, and from active joy to passive satisfaction. While this might seem like a reduction in intensity, it may actually be more faithful to the Quranic context.



According to classical Quranic exegesis, the meaning of *farihīna* in this verse is nuanced. Ibn Kathir explains that the martyrs are joyful and delighted with what God has given them of Paradise, honor, and reward. Al-Sa'di states that their joy is complete and perfect, as they have attained the highest levels of Paradise. However, Al-Jalalayn and other commentators note that the joy here is not the boisterous, external joy of worldly celebrations but a deep, internal, spiritual joy. Some exegetes specifically link *farihīna* in this verse to *ghibtah* (غبطى) and *haboor* (حبور). *Ghibtah* refers to a state of tranquility, comfort, and deep heartfelt joy — a state of wishing for a similar blessing without wanting it to be taken from others. *Haboor* refers to great joy that is apparent on the face and in the heart.

Given this exegetical background, "pleased" may actually capture the nuance more accurately than "rejoicing." "Rejoicing" often implies an outward, visible, even vocal expression of joy — clapping, singing, celebrating. The martyrs' joy in Paradise, while real and intense, is described in the Quran as a state of inner contentment and satisfaction. They are not described as dancing or shouting but as being at peace, satisfied with what God has given them. "Pleased" carries connotations of satisfaction, contentment, and quiet happiness. Sarwar's translation therefore represents a modulation that is well justified by the exegetical tradition.

The other translators' use of "rejoicing" is not incorrect, but it may be less precise. The procedure of equivalence, while valid, sometimes sacrifices nuance for naturalness. In this case, the modulation to "pleased" achieves a higher degree of exegetical accuracy.

The cognitive scenario for *farihīna* in this verse can be explicated as follows, based on Wierzbicka's (1999) framework:

People think like this:

When I say something to other people,

It is good if these people think that I feel something very good

It is not good if these people think that I feel something bad

Something very good happened to someone,

This person knows that this will last forever,

This person does not want anything else now,



This person feels something very good because of this,

This person feels that nothing bad can happen now

This scenario captures the eschatological dimension of farḥ in this verse: the joy of the martyrs is eternal and secure, unlike worldly joy which is temporary and fragile.

D. Analysis of Verse 4: Surah Az-Zumar (39:45)

Arabic Text (Quran 39:45):

فَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

Sahih International Translation:

"And when Allah is mentioned alone, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink with aversion, but when those [worshipped] other than Him are mentioned, immediately they rejoice."

This verse describes the reaction of disbelievers (those who do not believe in the Hereafter) to the mention of God versus the mention of false deities. When God alone is mentioned, their hearts shrink with aversion and disgust. But when their false gods are mentioned, they yastabshiroon — they rejoice, become joyful, or show gladness. The word yastabshiroon is derived from the root b-sh-r, which is the same root as bushrā (glad tidings). It carries the specific meaning of rejoicing upon hearing good news or something pleasing.

The following table presents the renditions of yastabshiroon (يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ) by eight translators:

Translator	Rendition of يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ
Khan	rejoice
Maulana	joyful
Pickthal	glad
Rashad	satisfied



Translator	Rendition of يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ
Sarwar	rejoice
Shakir	joyful
Sherali	rejoice
Yusuf Ali	filled with joy

Discussion of Verse 4:

The analysis of this verse reveals a variety of renditions, reflecting the semantic richness of the Arabic root b-sh-r. The renditions include "rejoice" (Khan, Sarwar, Sherali), "joyful" (Maulana, Shakir), "glad" (Pickthal), "satisfied" (Rashad), and "filled with joy" (Yusuf Ali). All of these can be classified under the procedure of equivalence, as they represent different English expressions that convey the same basic situation of positive emotional response. However, Rashad's choice of "satisfied" may also involve an element of modulation, as it shifts from an emotional response (joy) to a cognitive state (satisfaction).

The word yastabshiroon is particularly significant because it is derived from bushrā (good news). The verbal form yastabshiroon implies an active reception of good news and a consequent state of joy. In the context of this verse, the disbelievers react to the mention of their false gods as if they have received good news. Their joy is therefore not neutral but is criticized by the verse as misplaced. The proper object of joy should be God alone, but the disbelievers have inverted this order.

Among the various English renditions, "rejoice" and "are filled with joy" capture the active, emotional dimension most accurately. "Joyful" is an adjective describing a state, which is somewhat less active but still appropriate. "Glad" is also appropriate, though slightly less intense. "Satisfied" is the least accurate, as it describes a state of contentment rather than the active joy of receiving good news. Rashad's translation here may have sacrificed some semantic precision for naturalness.

The classical exegesis of this verse emphasizes the irony of the disbelievers' reaction. Al-Sa'di notes that they hate the mention of God alone because it contradicts their polytheistic beliefs, but they rejoice when their false gods are mentioned because it confirms their false religion. Al-Baghawi explains that yastabshiroon here means they



become happy and cheerful. The root b-sh-r is explicitly mentioned by commentators as indicating the reception of glad tidings.

The cognitive scenario for yastabshiroon differs from that of farḥ in that it specifically involves the reception of news:

People think like this:

When I say something to other people,

It is good if these people think that I feel something good

Someone says something to this person,

This person thinks that what this someone said is good,

This person did not know this before,

This person feels something good because of this

In this verse, the "good news" is false — the mention of false gods. But the disbelievers perceive it as good because it aligns with their existing beliefs. The Quran thus uses the positive emotion term yastabshiroon ironically, to highlight the misguidance of the disbelievers.

E. Analysis of Verse 5: Surah An-Nahl (16:58)

Arabic Text (Quran 16:58):

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

Common English Translation:

"And when one of them is given the good news of (the birth of) a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses his grief."

This verse describes a practice of pre-Islamic Arab society: when a man was given the news that his wife had given birth to a daughter, his face would darken with anger and grief, and he would suppress his rage. The verse criticizes this attitude, which valued sons over daughters. The word bushshira (بُشِّرَ) is derived from the same root b-sh-r as bushrā (good news) and yastabshiroon (they rejoice). However, in this verse, the "good news" is presented ironically: what is culturally considered good news



(the birth of a child) is actually received as bad news because the child is female.

The following table presents the renditions of bushshira (بُشَيْرَ) by eight translators:

Translator	Rendition of بُشَيْرَ
Khan	the news of
Maulana	announced to
Pickthal	receiveth tidings
Rashad	gets a baby girl
Sarwar	the glad news
Shakir	announced to
Sherali	conveyed the tidings
Yusuf Ali	news

Discussion of Verse 5:

The analysis of this verse reveals a range of renditions, from literal translations of "good news" to more paraphrastic renditions. Sarwar explicitly retains the positive connotation with "the glad news," while most other translators use more neutral terms such as "news," "announced," "tidings," or "conveyed the tidings." Rashad's rendition "gets a baby girl" is the most paraphrastic, avoiding the "news" metaphor altogether.

From the perspective of Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) framework, most of these renditions can be classified as literal translation, which is a direct translation procedure. Literal translation involves a word-for-word transfer from SL to TL that is grammatically and idiomatically acceptable. In this case, the Arabic bushshira literally means "he was given good news." The translators who use "the news of," "announced to," "receiveth tidings," and "conveyed the tidings" are preserving the underlying structure of the source text while adjusting the surface form to fit English grammar.



Sarwar's "the glad news" is also a literal translation, but it explicitly preserves the positive evaluation inherent in the Arabic root b-sh-r. This is actually more faithful to the literal meaning of the Arabic, even though the context is ironic. The irony of the verse depends precisely on the fact that what is linguistically "good news" is received as bad news. By translating "glad news," Sarwar preserves this ironic tension. The translators who use neutral terms such as "news" or "announced" lose some of this irony, though the context (the negative reaction) still conveys the criticism.

Rashad's "gets a baby girl" represents modulation or even adaptation (an oblique procedure). By completely abandoning the "news" metaphor, Rashad changes the point of view from the communication event to the birth event itself. This makes the verse more direct and easier to understand for modern readers, but it sacrifices the specific irony of the original, which hinges on the contrast between the linguistic form ("good news") and the emotional reaction (anger and grief).

The classical exegesis of this verse consistently highlights the irony. Ibn Kathir explains that the pre-Islamic Arabs considered the birth of a daughter a disgrace, to the extent that some would bury their daughters alive. Al-Sa'di notes that the "good news" of a daughter was, in their view, the worst possible news. Al-Jalalayn states that the verse exposes their contradiction: they claim that angels are daughters of God (which they consider an honor for God), but they themselves hate the birth of daughters. The linguistic form *bushshira* (he was given good news) is therefore used ironically.

The cognitive scenario for *bushrā* in this verse is inverted:

People think like this:

When I say something to other people,

It is good if these people think that I feel something good

Someone says something to this person,

This person thinks that what this someone said is good,

This person did not know this before,

This person feels something good because of this

But in this case,



This person thinks that what this someone said is bad,

This person feels something bad because of this,

This person thinks that this news should have been good,

But this person does not feel good

This inverted scenario captures the Quranic critique of pre-Islamic Arab attitudes toward daughters. The term *bushrā* is preserved linguistically, but its emotional content is negated by the context. This demonstrates that even positive emotion terms can be used ironically in the Quran to highlight moral failings.

F. Summary of Translation Procedures Across All Verses

Having analyzed each of the five verses individually, it is now possible to present a comprehensive summary of the translation procedures employed across all renditions. The following table aggregates the data from all verses and all translators:

Verse	Arabic Term	Most Frequent Rendition	Translation Procedure	Percentage
10:58	فَلْيَفْرَحُوا	rejoice	Equivalence	87.5%
10:58	فَلْيَفْرَحُوا	happy	Modulation	12.5%
30:36	فَرِحُوا	rejoice	Equivalence	75%
30:36	فَرِحُوا	happy / exult	Modulation	25%
3:170	فَرِحِينَ	rejoicing	Equivalence	86%
3:170	فَرِحِينَ	pleased	Modulation	14%
39:45	يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ	rejoice / joyful / glad	Equivalence	87.5%
39:45	يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ	satisfied	Modulation	12.5%



Verse	Arabic Term	Most Frequent Rendition	Translation Procedure	Percentage
16:58	بُشِّرَ	news / announced / tidings	Literal (direct)	87.5%
16:58	بُشِّرَ	glad news	Literal (direct)	12.5%

Overall findings:

1. Equivalence (oblique procedure) is the most frequently used procedure, accounting for approximately 80-85% of all renditions across the five verses. This indicates that translators generally perceive a direct situational correspondence between Arabic happiness terms and English emotional expressions such as "rejoice," "joyful," and "glad."
2. Modulation (oblique procedure) is the second most frequent, accounting for approximately 10-15% of renditions. Modulation occurs when translators shift the point of view, category, or intensity of the emotion. Examples include Sarwar's "happy" instead of "rejoice" (10:58), Sarwar's "pleased" instead of "rejoicing" (3:170), and Yusuf Ali's "exult" instead of "rejoice" (30:36).
3. Literal translation (direct procedure) is used only in specific contexts, particularly in Verse 5 (16:58) where the structure of the Arabic allows for direct transfer. However, even in this case, some translators modulated by using "glad news" to preserve the ironic tension.
4. Borrowing, calque, transposition, and adaptation were not observed in this dataset. This suggests that the translation of happiness terms in the Quran does not typically require extreme procedures such as borrowing the Arabic word (which would be incomprehensible to English readers) or full adaptation (which would change the meaning too drastically).

The preference for oblique procedures (equivalence and modulation) over direct procedures (literal) confirms the observation of Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) that translation between structurally and culturally distant languages requires indirect approaches. Arabic and English belong to different language families (Semitic vs. Germanic) and operate within vastly different cultural and religious frameworks. Direct, word-for-word translation of emotion terms would often produce unnatural or misleading results.



G. The Role of Exegesis (Tafsir) in Evaluating Translation Accuracy

One of the unique contributions of this study is the integration of classical Quranic exegesis into the evaluation of translation procedures. The translations are not judged solely on linguistic criteria but also on their fidelity to the interpretive tradition. The following table summarizes the exegetical consensus for each verse and evaluates which translation procedure best captures that consensus:

Verse	Exegetical Consensus	Most Accurate Translation Procedure	Most Accurate Translator(s)
10:58	Farḥ is praiseworthy when it stems from gratitude for God's bounty and mercy. The emotion is active, expressive, and commanded.	Equivalence (rejoice)	All except Sarwar
30:36	Farḥ is a natural human reaction to mercy, but it becomes blameworthy if it leads to forgetfulness of God. The emotion is active but transient.	Equivalence (rejoice)	Khan, Maulana, Pickthal, Rashad, Shakir, Sherali
3:170	Farḥ is deep, internal, spiritual joy, best described as ghibtah (contentment) and haboor (inner happiness).	Modulation (pleased)	Sarwar
39:45	Yastabshiroon derives from bushrā (glad tidings). The emotion	Equivalence (rejoice / joyful / glad)	Khan, Sarwar, Sherali, Maulana, Shakir, Pickthal,



Verse	Exegetical Consensus	Most Accurate Translation Procedure	Most Accurate Translator(s)
	is active and ironic.		Yusuf Ali
16:58	Bushshira is used ironically. The linguistic form preserves "good news" while the reaction shows it is received as bad news.	Literal with preservation of "good/glad"	Sarwar (glad news)

This exegetical grounding reveals an important finding: no single translation procedure is universally superior. The choice of procedure depends on the specific context and the specific emotion term. For verses where farḥ is active and commanded (10:58) or descriptive of a natural reaction (30:36), equivalence ("rejoice") is most accurate. For verses where farḥ describes a deep, internal, spiritual state (3:170), modulation ("pleased") is more accurate. For verses involving bushrā and its derivatives (39:45, 16:58), preserving the "good news" dimension is essential, whether through equivalence or literal translation.

H. Cultural Scripts and the Configuration of Meaning

Following the approach of Wierzbicka (1999), it is possible to configure the meaning of Arabic happiness terms using cultural scripts. These scripts are written in simple, universal terms that are not tied to any particular language's complex vocabulary. They allow for cross-linguistic comparison of emotional concepts.

Configuration of Farḥ (praiseworthy type, as in 10:58 and 3:170):

People think like this:

When I say something to other people,

It is good if these people think that I feel something very good



It is not good if these people think that I feel something bad

Something very good happened to someone,

This person knows that this good thing came from God,

This person feels something very good because of this,

This person wants to say something good because of this,

This person does not want anything else now

Configuration of Farḥ (blameworthy type, implied in 30:36 for those who forget God):

People think like this:

When I say something to other people,

It is good if these people think that I feel something good

Something good happened to someone,

This person feels something good because of this,

But this person does not think about who caused this good thing,

This person thinks only about themselves,

This is not good

Configuration of Bushrā (glad tidings, as in 39:45 and 16:58):

People think like this:

When I say something to other people,

It is good if these people think that I feel something good

Someone says something to this person,

This person thinks that what this someone said is good,

This person did not know this before,

This person feels something good because of this,

This person may want to say something good to others because of this



Configuration of Ghibtah (as in 3:170, according to exegetes):

People think like this:

When I say something to other people,

It is good if these people think that I feel something very good

Something very good happened to someone,

This person feels something very good because of this,

This person knows that this will last forever,

This person does not want anything else,

This person feels peace in their heart

These configurations demonstrate that Arabic happiness terms are not simple synonyms but carry distinct cognitive scenarios. Farḥ emphasizes the feeling that arises from something good happened, bushrā emphasizes the reception of good news, and ghibtah emphasizes peaceful contentment. The translators who capture these nuances — such as Sarwar's "pleased" for farihīna in 3:170 — achieve greater exegetical accuracy than those who use a single equivalent ("rejoice") for all instances.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present study has identified the translation procedures applied to happy emotion expressions in the Holy Quran, specifically the Arabic terms farḥ and bushrā and their derivatives, across eight English translations of five selected verses. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method, drawing on Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) taxonomy of translation procedures, Wierzbicka's (1999) cultural scripts theory, and classical Quranic exegesis from Ibn Kathir, Al-Sa'di, Al-Jalalayn, Al-Baghawi, Al-Waseet, and Al-Muyassar.

The most relevant translation procedures found in this study are equivalence and modulation, both of which are oblique translation procedures. Equivalence was used in approximately 80-85% of renditions, particularly for verses where farḥ is active, expressive, and commanded (10:58) or descriptive of a natural human reaction (30:36).



Modulation was used in approximately 10-15% of renditions, particularly for verses where the exegetical tradition emphasizes internal, spiritual states (3:170) or where a shift in intensity is required (30:36, Yusuf Ali's "exult").

Literal translation (a direct procedure) was used only in one verse (16:58) where the structure of the Arabic allows for direct transfer. However, even in this case, some translators modulated by preserving the positive "glad news" to maintain the ironic tension of the verse. Borrowing, calque, transposition, and adaptation were not observed in this dataset.

The integration of classical exegesis into the evaluation of translation procedures revealed an important finding: no single translation procedure is universally superior. The choice of procedure depends on the specific context and the specific emotion term. For verses where *farḥ* is active and commanded, equivalence ("rejoice") is most accurate. For verses where *farḥ* describes a deep, internal, spiritual state, modulation ("pleased") is more accurate. For verses involving *bushrā*, preserving the "good news" dimension is essential.

The cultural scripts approach allowed for the explication of meaning across languages. The configurations of *farḥ* (praiseworthy and blameworthy types), *bushrā* (glad tidings), and *ghibtah* (peaceful contentment) demonstrate that Arabic happiness terms are not simple synonyms but carry distinct cognitive scenarios. Translators who capture these nuances achieve greater exegetical accuracy.

Having seen the meaning transfer from the SL (Arabic) to the TL (English), the culture scripts theory is relevant for understanding how positive emotions are conceptualized in different linguistic and cultural systems. It is possible to evaluate an emotion partially or fully through its configuration of meaning. The majority of emotion words in this study carry a positive evaluation related to divine grace, satisfaction, and good news. These feelings are categorized at a high level as a style and strategy of communication, reflecting the Quranic emphasis on positive emotions when they are directed toward God and His mercy.

The study has several limitations. First, it focused on only five verses and eight translations. Future research could expand the dataset to include more verses and more translations, including translations into languages other than English. Second, the study focused exclusively on positive emotions (*farḥ* and *bushrā*). Future research could examine negative emotions (such as *ghaḍab*, anger; *khawf*, fear; *ḥuzn*, sadness) in the Quran and compare the translation procedures used for negative versus



positive emotions. Third, the study did not examine the reception of these translations by English-speaking Muslim readers. Future research could incorporate reader response studies to determine which translation procedures are most effective for different audiences.

Despite these limitations, the study makes a significant contribution to the field of translation studies, particularly in the area of emotion translation in religious texts. It demonstrates that the translation of positive emotions in the Quran requires a balance between semantic fidelity, exegetical accuracy, and target language naturalness. Oblique translation procedures — particularly equivalence and modulation — are more effective than direct procedures in achieving this balance.

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