




## A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Sermons from Nahj al-Balagha: A Translation Quality Assessment of Seyyed Ali Reza's English Translation

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### ABSTRACT

Discourse analysis, a linguistic approach within the social sciences, investigates the relationship between writers' works and their social environments, as well as the impact of these environments on their methods and styles. This research reviews the translation of Imam Ali's discourse, specifically examining the sermons addressed to the Kufis, through the lens of Fairclough's (1980) critical discourse analysis model. The study assesses the effectiveness of a selected English translation in conveying the original discourse. The importance of accurately translating the discourse in these sermons cannot be overstated; when translating significant texts, particularly holy texts, a translator's inability to convey the discourse effectively can result in a loss of the original message, meaning, and spirit. The translation analyzed in this research is Seyyed Ali Reza's (1980) version of Nahj al-Balagha, recognized as the most accessible and comprehensive translation. By applying Fairclough's (1980) discourse analysis, the study found that Imam Ali's discourse features the highest frequency in the description stage at 65%, while the explanation stage has the lowest frequency at 9%. Using Berman's (2010) translation model, the researchers found that clarification was the most frequently employed strategy in the analyzed translations, occurring 33% of the time. In contrast, the rationalization and qualitative impoverishment strategies were the least used, each at 8%.

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## 1. Introduction

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach within the social sciences that transcends mere linguistic forms to examine the literary ideologies that reflect social conditions and cultural contexts. This approach is particularly relevant in understanding how power dynamics shape societal discourse, as power influences every society and organizes its discourse. CDA analyzes literary works in relation to dominant societal power through three layers: description, interpretation, and contextual analysis (Mohseni, 2016). Undoubtedly, the sermons of *Nahj al-Balagha* encompass a wealth of subjects through which Imam Ali (PBUH) provides guidance aimed at steering society toward prosperity. His rhetoric carefully addresses the prevailing political and social conditions of his time (Parvin, 2016). This research employs a descriptive-analytical method alongside Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1996) to examine the strategies used by the translator in rendering the discourse of *Nahj al-Balagha*, based on Berman's (2010) model. The researcher aims to achieve the following objectives in this study:

- To compare the English translation of *Nahj al-Balagha* with the original discourse.
- To identify the translation strategies applied by the translator in conveying the discourse of *Nahj al-Balagha*.

This study analyzes the discourse of Imam Ali (PBUH) to elucidate the psychological and artistic dimensions of his sermons, demonstrating their impact on the political environment and the behavior of the Kufis, as well as Imam Ali's interactions with them, through the application of Fairclough's theory. The researcher hopes that the results of this research will be valuable to scholars, lecturers, professors, and translation students. While these students are trained in translation techniques, they may not fully grasp the specific requirements for translating specialized texts or the distinctive features of their language and writing. Additionally, students of theology can benefit from the findings of this study. Furthermore, this research aims to advance the field of translation studies within religious and specialized contexts. It could serve as a catalyst for increased attention to *Nahj al-Balagha*, a rich and valuable text. Unfortunately, there has been limited focus on the various aspects of translating *Nahj al-Balagha* in recent times.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Fairclough's model of CDA

The third main approach in critical discourse analysis (CDA) is that of Norman Fairclough, whose theory has been central to the field for over a decade. In his earlier work, Fairclough referred to his approach as Critical Language Study (1989, p. 5). He described the objective of this approach as "a contribution to the general raising of consciousness of exploitative social relations through a focus on language" (1989, p. 4). This aim continues to be prominent in his later work, which has further developed his framework into one of the most comprehensive in CDA (Fairclough, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b; Chuliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

According to Chuliaraki and Fairclough (1999), CDA "brings social science and linguistics together within a single theoretical and analytical framework, setting up a dialogue between them" (p. 6). The linguistic theory underpinning this approach is Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which serves as the foundation for Fairclough's

analytical framework and that of other CDA practitioners (Fowler et al., 1979; Fowler, 1991; Hodge & Kress, 1979). Fairclough's approach also draws on several critical social theorists, including Foucault (particularly his concept of orders of discourse), Gramsci (his concept of hegemony), and Habermas (his concept of the colonization of discourses), among others (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b).

Chuliaraki and Fairclough (1999) assert that critical discourse analysis (CDA) has a unique contribution to make. They argue that "the past two decades or so have been a period of profound economic and social transformation on a global scale" (p. 30). Although these changes stem from specific actions by individuals, they have often been perceived as "part of nature" (p. 4)—that is, as natural phenomena rather than the result of human agency. According to Chuliaraki and Fairclough (1999), these recent economic and social changes "are to a significant degree...transformations in language and discourse" (p. 4). Thus, CDA can play a vital role in theorizing these transformations and fostering awareness "of what is, how it has come to be, and what it might become, allowing people to make and remake their lives" (p. 4).

With this objective in mind, Chuliaraki and Fairclough (1999) claim that CDA of communicative interactions aims to demonstrate how the semiotic and linguistic features of the interaction are systematically linked to social dynamics. They argue that what occurs socially is, in part or wholly, expressed through semiotic or linguistic means. In other words, CDA systematically examines the relationships between the symbolic and non-symbolic, between discourse and the non-discursive (p. 113).

In this approach to CDA, there are three analytical focuses for analyzing any communicative event (interaction): text (e.g., a news report), discourse practice (e.g., the processes of production and consumption), and sociocultural practice (e.g., the social and cultural structures that give rise to the communicative event) (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 57; Chuliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 113). These closely align with van Dijk's three dimensions of ideology analysis: discourse, socio-cognition, and social analysis (the analysis of social structures). The primary difference between Fairclough's and van Dijk's approaches lies in the second dimension, which mediates between the other two. While van Dijk views social cognition and mental models as the mediators between discourse and the social context, Fairclough attributes this role to discourse practices—specifically, text production and consumption (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 59). In this respect, the two approaches to CDA are "similar in conception" (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 59).

This implies that the study of texts is not merely an exercise in abstract lexicogrammatical description but rather an analysis of a crucial tool in the reproduction or reformation of the broader social world. This is especially true for texts produced in political contexts—such as speeches, policy papers, and reports—since they often aim to achieve the hegemony of a particular perspective with the explicit goal of instigating change in other (i.e., non-discursive) aspects of social practice. By revealing the processes through which such hegemonic practices are manifested in texts, critical discourse researchers, as producers of texts themselves, can contribute to the dismantling of those same hegemonic practices.

## *2.2. Related studies*

Many factors influence translators when translating a text, one of which is the transmission of ideology through translated works. The translator's decisions are, to some extent, shaped by the constraints of the target culture. Kang (2007) notes that any translation

process is influenced by historically constituted discursive resources, which guide the translator in reformulating the text according to the norms and conventions of the target culture. To produce an acceptable translation for the target audience, the translator must consider the cultural context of the target readers.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Translation Studies share the understanding that textual features must be connected to the social and ideological contexts of both text production and reception. Translators operate within specific socio-political contexts, producing texts for particular purposes and audiences. Thus, translations reflect the influence of discursive, social, and ideological constraints, norms, and conventions. In the target language, a translation may fulfill a communicative purpose that differs significantly from the original function of the source text. The added value of a translation is closely related to its new context, the objectives pursued by translators and other stakeholders (those who use the translation or for whom it is created), and their overall political goals. Therefore, specific textual features of translated texts must be linked to the broader social, political, and cultural contexts of their production and reception. The choices made by the translator can be interpreted, at least tentatively, in terms of the wider goals and strategies pursued by agents in the cultural and political sphere, as well as the norms and constraints operating within those fields (Ahmadi, 2017).

In a related study, Ebrahimi (2010) analyzed the discourse of news articles from The New York Times (NYT) and The Tehran Times (TT) to uncover any underlying meanings in each newspaper's political coverage of the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. The aim was to determine whether the writers exhibited biased stances in their reporting on this shared issue. To achieve this, 20 articles (10 from each newspaper) were randomly selected from a pool of 100 articles (50 from each source). The framework employed was Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), which emphasizes the importance of social context in the historical development of language and in individual discourse events.

The analysis focused on the linguistic choices—specifically, the meaning potential of language found in lexis, grammar, and the sound system—within Halliday's three functions of language. The linguistic features analyzed in the articles from The NYT and The TT included: active and passive voice, nominalization in ideational meaning, modality and lexical choices in interpersonal meaning, and thematization in textual meaning. The researcher concluded that traces of ideological and biased political stances were present in the articles from both newspapers. However, The New York Times employed these linguistic features more frequently, which allowed it to convey its ideologies more ambiguously and to present the situations and circumstances as commonsensical.

This study aimed to investigate whether the receptor language and culture entail obligatory features that shape possible interpretations of translations and extend their meanings in directions not inherent in the source text. As a result, translators must make choices about which aspects or parts of the text to transpose and emphasize. This decision-making process inherently makes translation a partisan act, whether engaged and committed implicitly or explicitly. By adopting Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly the framework established by Fairclough (1989), this investigation sought to illuminate the relationship between language and ideology in translation. More specifically, it aimed to uncover the underlying ideological assumptions present in both the source text (ST) and the target text (TT), ultimately assessing whether translators' ideologies are imposed in their translations. The corpus consisted of the complete text of the source material and two different Persian translations of the book. According to the authors, the present study

examines CDA based on Fairclough's theory, which addresses three levels: description, interpretation, and explanation, particularly in relation to Nahj al-Balagha. This approach represents a novel contribution to the field.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Overview*

In this chapter, the researcher outlines the methodology employed in this study. This section provides an overview of the corpus type and the rationale behind its selection, as well as an explanation of the research procedure. Subsequently, it details the approach taken to analyze the sources used by the researcher and examines the data. Finally, it describes the model upon which the research is based.

#### *3.2. Corpus*

Nahj al-Balagha, following the Holy Quran, serves as a vibrant source of thought and knowledge, offering a comprehensive framework for the social, economic, and cultural guidance of society. In this research, the researcher aims to analyze the discourse of sermons pertaining to the description of the Kufis as presented in Nahj al-Balagha, which contains the insightful and thought-provoking words of Imam Ali (PBUH). The analysis also involves a review of the strategies employed in the translation by the translator. For this purpose, the researcher utilized the English translation of Nahj al-Balagha by Sayyid Ali Reza. Seyyed Alireza, the former Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, translated Nahj al-Balagha into English and published it in 1973 in Karachi, released in three volumes by Pir Mohammad Ibrahim. It was subsequently republished by the World Institute of Islamic Services in Tehran in 1980 as an 816-page volume, and later reprinted in 1987 by the Qom Center for Islamic Studies. Among the various translations of Nahj al-Balagha into English, Seyyed Alireza's translation is noted as the most popular. In addition to the printed version, this translation is widely accessible through many software programs.

#### *3.3. Procedures*

To achieve the objectives of this study, the book Nahj al-Balagha—one of the revered texts in Islam—was selected. From its various sections, twenty sermons were chosen, specifically those in which Imam Ali (PBUH) describes the people of Kufa. Among the available translations, the prominent work of Seyed Ali Reza was selected for analysis. The study compared this translation of Nahj al-Balagha with the original text, using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. Additionally, it examined the translation strategies employed by the translator according to Berman's (2010) model. The researcher focused on five key translation strategies outlined by Berman: Rationalization, Clarification, Expansion, Qualitative Impoverishment, and Quantitative Impoverishment.

#### *3.4. Data analysis*

Employing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, the researcher examines twenty critical sermons from Nahj al-Balagha. The imam (PBUH) is revealed to explicitly blame the people of Kufa on three levels: descriptive, interpretive, and explanatory.

### 3.5. Theoretical model

The model used in this study is based on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Model (1996), which views discourse as comprising three dimensions: text, discourse practice, and social action. Fairclough presents this theoretical model in his book *Language and Power*, illustrating it through the Figure 1.:

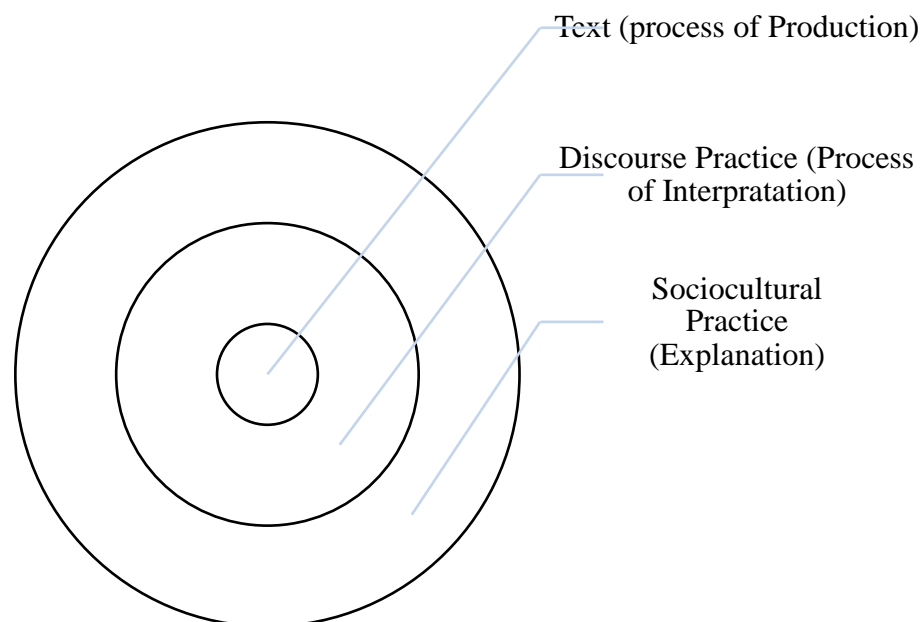


Figure 1. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Model (1996)

Fairclough (1989, 1995) model for CDA consists of three interrelated process of analysis which are tied to three interrelated dimensions of discourse. The three dimensions are:

- ✓ The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual text)
- ✓ The process by which the object is produced and revised (writing, speaking, designing and reading, listening, viewing) by human subjects;
- ✓ The socio-historical conditions that govern these processes.

According to Fairclough each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis:

- ✓ Text analysis (description);
- ✓ Process analysis (interpretation);
- ✓ Social analysis (explanation).

## 4. Results and discussions

Due to the constraints of academic publications, providing a comprehensive discussion of all the data would render this paper excessively lengthy. Therefore, a representative

sample has been presented below. However, the full statistical analysis for all data is provided in the corresponding tables.

#### 4.1. A study of the words used to describe the people of Kufa

As previously discussed, the sermons referenced provide a comprehensive and accurate reflection of the societal conditions, with the people of Kufa playing a pivotal role in shaping them. In other words, the majority of the statements within these sermons, in various forms, encapsulate the real conditions of the people of Kufa. The most significant examples are outlined below:

##### 4.1.1. Comparing the people of Kufa to camels

أَفْ لَكُمْ لَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ عِتَابَكُمْ، أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ عَوْضًا وَ بِالذَّلِّ مِنَ الْعِزِّ خَلْفًا. إِذَا دَعَوْتُمْ إِلَى جِهَادِ عَدُوِّكُمْ دَارَتْ أَعْيُنُكُمْ كَأَنَّكُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فِي عَمْرَةٍ وَ مِنَ الدُّهُولِ فِي سَكْرَةٍ. يَزِيحُ عَلَيْكُمْ حِوَارِي فَتَعْمَهُونَ وَ كَأَنَّ قُلُوبَكُمْ مَأْلُوسَةٌ فَانْتُمْ لَا تَعْقِلُونَ. مَا أَنْتُمْ لِي بِتَقِيَّةٍ سَخِيصِ اللَّيَالِي وَ مَا أَنْتُمْ بِرُكْنٍ يَمَالُ بِكُمْ وَ لَا زَوَافِرٍ عِزٍّ يُفْتَقَرُ إِلَيْكُمْ. مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا كَابِلٌ صَلَّى رِعَاتُهَا فَكَلَّمَا جُمِعَتْ مِنْ جَانِبٍ انْتَشَرَتْ مِنْ آخِرٍ. خ ٣٤

Woe to you. I am tired of rebuking you. Do you accept this worldly life in place of the next life? Or disgrace in place of dignity? When I invite you to fight your enemy your eyes revolve as though you are in the clutches of death, and the senselessness of the last moment. My pleadings are not understood by you and you remain stunned. It is thought your hearts are affected with madness so that you do not understand. I have lost my confidence in you for good. Neither are you a support for me to lean upon, nor a means to honor and victory. Your example is that of camels whose protector has disappeared, so when they are collected from one side, they disperse from the other. (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401)

The reference to having a weak will, scattered thoughts, and a lack of recognition of one's own interests highlights a failure to achieve consensus or unity. This inability to act with discipline and strength when confronting the enemy is a central critique. The simile of camels illustrates their short-sightedness, while the term 'misguidance' is interpreted as a reflection of their disobedience toward their leader and Imam (PBUH).

##### 4.1.2. Checking the contradiction between the words

The Imams, by employing opposing terms such as right and wrong, unity and division, effectively highlight the societal duality present in their sermons. In the following section, the researcher will analyze select sermons where these contradictory terms have been deliberately used to serve a specific rhetorical purpose.

ثُمَّ قَالَ (عليه السلام):

أُبَيِّتُ بَسْرًا قَدِ اطَّلَعَ الْيَمَنَ وَ إِنِّي وَ اللَّهُ لَأَظُنُّ أَنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ سَيُذَلُّونَ مِنْكُمْ بِاجْتِمَاعِهِمْ عَلَى بَاطِلِهِمْ وَ تَفَرُّقِكُمْ عَنْ حَقِّكُمْ، وَ بِمَعْصِيَتِكُمْ إِمَامَكُمْ فِي الْحَقِّ وَ طَاعَتِهِمْ إِمَامَهُمْ فِي الْبَاطِلِ، وَ بِأَدَائِهِمْ الْأَمَانَةَ إِلَى صَاحِبِيهِمْ وَ خِيَانَتِكُمْ، وَ بِصَلَابَتِهِمْ فِي بِلَادِهِمْ وَ فَسَادِكُمْ، فَلَوْ انْتَمَنْتُمْ أَحَدَكُمْ عَلَى قَعْبٍ لَحَشِيْتُ أَنْ يَذْهَبَ بِعِلَاقِيهِ. خ ٢٥

Then he continued: I have been informed that Busr has overpowered Yemen. By Allah, I have begun thinking about these people that they would shortly snatch away the whole country through their unity on their wrong and your disunity (from your right), and

separation. Your disobedience of your Imam in matters of right and their obedience to their leader in matters of wrong, your fulfillment of the trust in favor of their master and your betrayal, your good work in their cities, and your mischief. Even if I give you charge of a wooden bow I fear you would run away with its handle. (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401)

In the second part of the sermon, the Imam (PBUH) recounts the story of Busr ibn Artā, a notorious criminal from the Levant, and his conquest of Yemen. He then draws a parallel to the fate of the Iraqi people, foretelling their grim future and outlining its exact causes and contributing factors.

Some commentators on Nahj al-Balaghah mention that Mu'awiyah dispatched Busr ibn Artā, a ruthless and corrupt man known for his bloodshed and looting, to Medina with a large force. Mu'awiyah instructed him: "Wherever you go, oppress the followers of Ali and instill terror in their hearts. When you enter Medina, strike fear into its people, so they may face death with their own eyes, for they sought refuge with the Prophet, supported him, and defeated my father, Abu Sufyan".

The Imam (PBUH) also references Taha Hussein, the renowned Egyptian writer, who notes that Busr strictly carried out Mu'awiyah's orders, intensifying the violence. In his campaign of bloodshed, looting, and violation of rights, he spared nothing. When he arrived in Medina, he inflicted immense suffering, forcing the people to pledge allegiance to Mu'awiyah. Afterward, Busr proceeded to Yemen, where he continued his reign of terror, shedding blood and eventually beheading the two young sons of Ubaydullah ibn Abbas, the ruler of Yemen.

Ibn Athir adds: These two children were in the presence of a man from the nomads of Bani Kanana. When Bouser wanted to kill them, the Kenani man said, "Why do you kill those who are not guilty? If you want to kill them, then kill me too (so that I do not witness the disgrace that I have failed to keep the trust.)

In any case, this distressing news reached the Commander of the Faithful (A.S), and he was deeply saddened. At the end of his sermon, he declared: "I swear to God, I am certain that this group of oppressors and bloodthirsty tyrants will soon dominate you and seize the government from you."

The Imam (PBUH) then examines the reasons behind this impending downfall, highlighting four critical factors that always contribute to victory:

First, he says, "They are united in their falsehood, while you are divided in your truth". Unity is a key to victory in any situation, especially when supporters of the truth are united. However, it is painful when those who uphold the truth are divided, while those who uphold falsehood stand united. Falsehood inherently leads to division, whereas truth is a natural center of unity. Success in any social endeavor requires unity above all, as division and discord act as deadly poisons.

Second, the Imam (PBUH) says, "You do not obey your leader in the pursuit of truth, while they obey their leader in the pursuit of falsehood". Disciplined obedience is a fundamental condition for victory. No army, organization, or nation can achieve success without adherence to leadership. Modern management also emphasizes the importance of discipline and following a leader's command to ensure success.



Third, he says, “They are loyal to their leader, while you betray yours”. Their loyalty enables them to mobilize their resources, forces, and capital effectively against their opponents, while your betrayal undermines everything. A group lacking the necessary resources and unity is doomed to failure. Some commentators on Nahj al-Balaghah interpret ‘trust’ here as ‘allegiance’ but the broader interpretation of loyalty, as evidenced by the Imam’s following statements, seems more accurate.

Fourth, “They strive to improve their cities and lands, while you engage in corruption”. The oppressors have unity, discipline, trust, and reform in their lands, while you are divided, disobedient, treacherous, and corrupt. It is only natural that such disciplined and united people will triumph over a disorganized and corrupt group. No matter how capable a leader or ruler may be, they cannot succeed with a people who are divided and corrupt. The strength of a cause depends on the integrity and competence of its followers, while falsehood is fortified by the strength, unity, and loyalty of its adherents.

To conclude, the Imam (PBUH) asks: “How can I trust you when, if I entrust even a cup to one of you, I fear you would either break the handle or lose its strap? How can those who fail in such minor responsibilities be trusted with the most important positions in the Islamic government, including matters of war, peace, and the treasury?” (Makarem Shirazi, 2008).

4.1.3. The Kufis are compared to those who appear to be men but possess the intelligence of children, and are like women kept secluded from the outside world

يا أشباه الرجال و لا رجال، حُلومُ الأَطْفالِ و عُقولُ رِباتِ الحِجَالِ، لَوَدِدْتُ أَيُّ لَمْ أَرُكُمْ و لَمْ أَعْرِفْكُمْ مَعْرِفَةً و اللهُ جَزَتْ نَدَمًا و  
 أَعْقَبَتْ سَدَمًا. قَاتَلَكُمْ اللهُ لَقَدْ مَلَأْتُمْ قَلْبِي قَيْحًا و شَحَنْتُمْ صَدْرِي غَيْظًا و جَزَعْتُمْوَنِي نَعَبِ التَّهْمَامِ أَنْفَاسًا و أَفْسَدْتُمْ عَلَيَّ رَأْيِي بِالْبَعْضِيَانِ  
 و الخِذْلَانِ، حَتَّى لَقَدْ قَالَتْ فَرِيشٌ إِنَّ ابْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَجُلٌ شَجَاعٌ و لَكِنْ لَا عِلْمَ لَهُ بِالْحَرْبِ. لِلَّهِ أَبُوهُمُ! و هَلْ أَحَدٌ مِنْهُمْ أَشَدُّ لَهَا مِرَاسًا  
 و أَفْدَمُ فِيهَا مَقَامًا مِنِّي؟ لَقَدْ نَهَضْتُ فِيهَا و مَا بَلَغْتُ العِشْرِينَ و هَا أَنَا ذَا قَدْ دَرَفْتُ عَلَى السِّتِينَ؛ و لَكِنْ لَا رَأْيَ لِمَنْ لَا يُطَاع. خ  
 ٢٧

O’ you a semblance of men, not men, your intelligence is that of children and your wit is that of the occupants of the curtained canopies (women kept in seclusion from the outside world). I wish I had not seen you nor known you. By Allah, this acquaintance has brought about shame and resulted in repentance. May Allah fight you! You have filled my heart with pus and loaded my bosom with rage. You made me drink mouthfuls of grief one after the other. You shattered my counsel by disobeying and leaving me so much so that Quraysh started saying that the son of Abi Talib is brave but does not know (the tactics of) war. Allah bless them! Is there anyone among them who is fiercer in the war and more experienced in it than I am? I rose for it although yet within the twenties, and here I am, have crossed over sixty, but one who is not obeyed can have no opinion (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

In the first description, the Imam (PBUH) rebukes the Kufis for lacking the courage, protection, and zeal of true manhood. Although they appeared as men, they lacked the essential qualities of manliness. History attests that the friendship of the people of Kufa and Iraq toward the Imam (PBUH) during his caliphate brought nothing but grief and sorrow, caused by their weaknesses, infidelity, breaches of covenant, and hypocrisy. This group created significant challenges for the Imam (PBUH), despite his resourcefulness and leadership. It is no wonder the Imam (PBUH) wished he had never encountered them or that they had not gathered around him.

The Imam's discourse in this sermon reveals deep despair over the people of Kufa. The prevailing power dynamics and societal conditions played a fundamental role in shaping this sentiment. After the death of the Holy Prophet (May Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family), the most significant political deviation in Islamic leadership occurred, which became the foundation for subsequent moral and social corruption.

Thus, while the Imam (PBUH) criticizes the Kufis, he also condemns the oppression of the Umayyads, whose tyranny had rendered the people of Kufa timid, unstable, and unreliable. Although many were aware of the injustices and corruption, the stifling oppression of the time left them afraid to speak out, leading them to feign ignorance.

#### 4.1.4. Describing the people of Kufa to people of non-lineage

مُنِيْتُ بِمَنْ لَا يُطِيعُ إِذَا أَمَرْتُ وَلَا يُجِيبُ إِذَا دَعَوْتُ. لَا أَبَا لَكُمْ، مَا تَنْتَظِرُونَ بِنَصْرِكُمْ رَبِّكُمْ، أَمَا دِينٌ يَجْمَعُكُمْ وَلَا حِمِيَّةٌ تُحْمِسُكُمْ؟ أَقْوَمُ فِيكُمْ مُسْتَصْرِحاً وَأُنَادِيكُمْ مُتَعَوِّثاً فَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ لِي قَوْلًا وَلَا تُطِيعُونَ لِي أَمْرًا حَتَّى [تَكْشِفَ] تَكْشِفَ الْأُمُورَ عَنِّي عَوَاقِبِ الْمَسَاءَةِ، فَمَا يُدْرِكُ بِكُمْ تَارٌ وَلَا يُبَلِّغُ بِكُمْ مَرَامًا. خ ٩٧

I am faced with men who do not obey when I order and do not respond when I call them. May you have no father! (Woe to you!) What are you waiting for to rise for the cause of Allah? Does not faith join you together, or sense of shame motivate you? I stand among you shouting and I am calling you for help, but you do not listen to my word and do not obey my orders, till circumstances show out their bad consequences. No blood can be avenged through you and no purpose can be achieved with you (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

The Imam (PBUH) expressed his deep hatred and dissatisfaction with the Kufis by using the phrase, "O people without lineage!" Here, the choice of words and the careful pairing of expressions play a significant role in conveying the Imam's (PBUH) intent and amplifying its impact on the audience.

#### 4.1.5. Description of the Companions of the Prophet (May Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family)

One of the most notable features of these selected sermons is the contrast the Imam (PBUH) draws between the deviations of the Kufis and the faithfulness of the Prophet's loyal companions. With deep regret and sorrow, he describes the true believers, highlighting their virtues. This verbal and descriptive contrast adds psychological and anthropological depth to the sermons, while also enhancing their aesthetic appeal. Moreover, it strengthens the ideological and motivational impact of the messages. Some examples of this contrast are as follows:

لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ أَصْحَابَ مُحَمَّدٍ (صلى الله عليه وآله) فَمَا أَرَى أَحَدًا يُشْبِهُهُمْ مِنْكُمْ، لَقَدْ كَانُوا يُصْبِحُونَ شُعْتًا غُرًّا وَ قَدْ بَاتُوا سُجْدًا وَ قِيَامًا، يَرَاوَحُونَ بَيْنَ جَبَاهِهِمْ وَ خُدُودِهِمْ وَ يَقِفُونَ عَلَى مِثْلِ الْجَنَّةِ مِنْ دِكْرِ مَعَادِهِمْ، كَأَنَّ بَيْنَ أَعْيُنِهِمْ رُكْبَ الْمِعْزَى مِنْ طُولِ سُجُودِهِمْ. إِذَا ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ هَمَلَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ حَتَّى تَبَلَّ جُنُوبَهُمْ، وَ مَادُوا كَمَا يَمِيدُ الشَّجَرُ يَوْمَ الرِّيحِ الْعَاصِفِ خَوْفًا مِنَ الْعِقَابِ وَ رَجَاءً لِلثَّوَابِ. خ ٩٧

I have seen the companions of the Prophet but I do not find anyone resembling them. They began the day with dust on their hair and face (in the hardship of life) and passed the night in prostration and standing in prayers. Sometimes they put down their foreheads and sometimes their cheeks. Remembering their resurrection, they seemed as though they stood on live burning coals. It seemed that in between their eyes, there were signs like knees of

goats, resulting from long prostrations. When Allah was mentioned their eyes flowed freely till their shirt collars were drenched. They trembled as the tree trembled on the day of stormy wind for fear of punishment and hope of reward. (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401)

In the final part of this sermon, the Imam (PBUH) describes a special group of the Holy Prophet's (AS) companions, presenting them as a model for his own followers. He highlights seven key characteristics: First, he says: "I have seen the companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him), but I do not see any of you like them!" He explains that "they had disheveled hair and dusty faces," living as ascetics in poverty and hardship, without expressing grief.

In the second description, he says: "They prostrated and stood all night in worship, never tiring". They alternated between placing their foreheads and the sides of their faces on the ground before God. Whenever their foreheads grew weary, they rested the right side of their face on the ground, and when the right side tired, they turned to the left.

In the third description, he adds: "They seemed to stand on flames, restless with fear of the Day of Judgment and the reckoning of deeds". They were deeply conscious of divine torment and, for this reason, were never at peace.

In the fourth description, he notes: "Their foreheads, from long prostrations, were calloused like the knees of a sheep". Their joy in worship and love of servitude led them to prostrate before God for long periods, leaving marks on their foreheads.

In the fifth description, the Imam (PBUH) says: "When the name of God was mentioned, tears flowed from their eyes, wetting their wrists". They wept for the love of God, the pain of separation, and the fear of divine punishment.

In the sixth and final description, he uses an evocative simile, comparing them to a tree shaking in a hurricane. The Imam (PBUH) explains that their trembling came from both fear of punishment and hope for reward. From one eye, tears of longing to meet God flowed, while from the other, tears of fear for divine judgment.

This profound balance between fear and hope is the way of pure and sincere servants. In previous sermons, the Imam (PBUH) explicitly contrasted the Kufis and the social situation in Kufa. However, in this and the following sermon, the comparison between two groups is made indirectly: those who embraced Islam with their whole being and those who were merely Muslims in appearance.

#### 4.1.6. Using metaphor in the words of sermons

Among various linguistic phenomena such as reference and metonymy, metaphor is a particularly significant form of expression that prompts the construction of multiple mental spaces. In the case of metaphor, these mental spaces undergo a specific conceptual blending operation during discourse, where they are integrated into a network that produces an inferential structure. Metaphor is both a linguistic and conceptual tool of particular importance in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Hodge and Kress (1993:15) argue that ideology involves "a systematically organized presentation of reality", and metaphors play an ideological role by "defining, in significant part, what one takes as reality" (Chilton and Lakoff, 1995). As Chilton (1996) notes, metaphors "can contribute to a situation where they privilege one understanding of reality over others". In line with this, Charteris-Black (2004)

states that “metaphor is central to critical discourse analysis, as it helps form a coherent view of reality”.

One of the key questions in Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis is the metaphorical nature of language. By using metaphors, the Imam (PBUH) gave his sermons a powerful ideological identity, helping to explain the political and social conditions of the time. Some examples include:

من خطبة له (عليه السلام) بعد غارة الضحاك بن قيس صاحب معاوية على الحاج بعد قصة الحكيم و فيها يستنهض أصحابه لما حدث في الأطراف:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ الْمُجْتَمِعَةُ أَيْدَانُهُمُ الْمُخْتَلِفَةُ أَهْوَاؤُهُمْ، كَلَامُهُمْ يُوهِي الصَّمَّ الصَّلَابَ وَ فِعْلُهُمْ يُطْلِعُ فِيكُمْ الْأَعْدَاءَ؛ تَقُولُونَ فِي الْمَجَالِسِ كَيْتَ وَ كَيْتَ، فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْقِتَالُ قُلْتُمْ حَيْدِي حَيْدِي. مَا عَزَّتْ دَعْوَةُ مَنْ دَعَاكُمْ وَ لَا اسْتَرَاخَ قَلْبُ مَنْ قَاسَاكُمْ، أَعَالِيلُ بِأَصَالِيلٍ وَ سَأَلْتُمُونِي التَّطْوِيلَ دِفَاعَ ذِي الدَّيْنِ الْمَطُولِ. لَا يَمْنَعُ الصَّبِيحَ اللَّيْلُ وَ لَا يُدْرِكُ الْحَقُّ إِلَّا بِالْجِدِّ. أَيُّ دَارٍ بَعْدَ دَارِكُمْ تَمْتَعُونَ وَ مَعَ أَيِّ إِمَامٍ بَعْدِي تَقَاتِلُونَ. خ ٢٩

From a sermon that the Commander of the Faithful delivered following a raid by al-Dahhak ibn Qays, a governor of **Mu’awiyah**, on pilgrims after the story of two arbitrators. In it, he mobilizes his companions in response to what happened in the outskirts of the domains under his control O' people, your bodies are together but your desires are divergent. Your talk softens the hard stones and your action attracts your enemy towards you. You claim in your settings that you would do this and that, but when fighting approaches, you say (to war), "Turn thou away" (i.e. flee away). If one calls you (for help) the call receives no heed. And he who deals hardly with you his heart has no solace. The excuses are amiss like that of a debtor unwilling to pay. The ignoble cannot ward off oppression. Right cannot be achieved without effort. Which is the house beside this one to protect? And with which leader (Imam) would you go for fighting after me? By Allah! **Deceived** is one whom you have deceived while by Allah! **He** who is successful with you receives only useless arrows. You are like broken arrows thrown over the enemy. By Allah! I am now in the position that I neither confirm your views nor hope for your support, nor challenge the enemy through you. What is the matter with you? What is your ailment? What is your cure? The other party is also men of your shape (but they are so different in character). Will there be talk without action, carelessness without piety, and greed in things not right? (Seyed Ali Reza. 1980.1401).

The Imam (PBUH) delivered this sermon in extremely difficult and critical circumstances. At a time when a bold and looting enemy was carrying out persecution and surprise attacks across various regions to weaken the morale of the Iraqi people, the Imam (PBUH) saw the solution in a strong, united movement and aggressive retaliation. He worked tirelessly to prepare the people for this, but the widespread weakness and inability that had overtaken the group, due to various reasons, prevented the formation of such a force.

Faced with no other option, the Imam (PBUH) resorted to a final tactic: using harsh reproach to mobilize this weak and pretentious group, hoping to awaken them to the dangers surrounding them. This sermon highlights the deep hypocrisy and inconsistency of the Kufis in both word and deed, as well as their extreme weakness in action. By employing powerful metaphors, the Imam (PBUH) intensified the impact of his words.

## 4.2. Examining the grammatical level of sermons based on critical discourse analysis

Another important question in Fairclough's analysis of critical discourse is the examination of grammatical aspects in texts. He notes that various grammatical features have relational values and emphasizes the different aspects of sentences. For instance, he explores which aspects are employed, identifying three main types: declarative statements, interrogative sentences, and commands. Among these, interrogative sentences are relatively more complex (Fairclough, 1996).

### 4.2.1. Interrogation

One of the key aspects of grammar in Fairclough's (1996) theory is the study of how interrogative meanings are utilized. Interrogation is a crucial type of discourse used to seek information about the unknown. However, in many cases, it diverges from its original purpose for rhetorical reasons and is employed with virtual meanings. This deviation plays a significant role in stimulating the audience's curiosity and engagement with the content of the question. We will now examine some examples of the rhetorical use of interrogation in the words of the Imam (PBUH):

وَلَقَدْ أَضْبَحْتَ الْأُمَّمَ تَخَافُ ظُلْمَ رُعَاتِهَا وَ أَضْبَحْتَ أَخَافُ ظُلْمَ رَعِيَّتِي. اسْتَنْفَرْتُكُمْ لِلْجِهَادِ فَلَمْ تَنْفِرُوا وَ أَسْمَعْتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تَسْمَعُوا وَ دَعَوْتُكُمْ سِرًّا وَ جَهْرًا فَلَمْ تَسْتَجِيبُوا وَ نَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَلَمْ تَقْبَلُوا؛ أَ شُهُودٌ كَثِيبٌ وَ عبيدٌ كَارِبَابٍ! أَتَلُو عَلَيْنِمْ الْحِكْمَ فَتَنْفِرُونَ مِنْهَا وَ أَعْطَكُمْ بِالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْبَالِغَةِ فَتَنْفِرُونَ عَنْهَا وَ أَخَذْتُكُمْ عَلَى جِهَادِ أَهْلِ الْبَغْيِ فَمَا آتَى عَلَى آخِرِ قَوْلِي حَتَّى أَرَائِكُمْ مُتَفَرِّقِينَ أَيَادِي سَبَا، تَرْجِعُونَ إِلَى مَجَالِسِكُمْ وَ تَتَخَادَعُونَ عَنْ مَوَاعِظِكُمْ. أَقْوَمُكُمْ غُدُوَّةً وَ تَرْجِعُونَ إِلَيَّ عَشِيَّةً كَظَهْرِ الْحَنِيَّةِ، عَجَزَ الْمُقْوَمُ وَ أَعْضَلَ الْمُقْوَمُ.

Amir al-Mu'minin talking about his companions and those of the Holy Prophet: People are afraid of the oppression of their rulers while I fear the oppression of my subjects. I called you for war but you did not come. I warned you but you did not listen. I called you secretly as well as openly, but you did not respond. I gave you sincere counsel, but you did not accept it. Are you present like the absent, and slaves like masters? I recite before you points of wisdom but you turn away from them, and I advise you with far-reaching advice but you disperse away from it. I rouse you for jihad against the people of revolt but before I come to the end of my speech, I see you disperse like the sons of Saba. You return to your places and deceive one another by your counsel. I straighten you in the morning but you are back to me in the evening as curved as the back of a bow. The straightener has become weary while those to be straightened have become incorrigible (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

### 4.2.2. Interpretation stage

Fairclough argues that the priority of inter-discourse and intertextual relations in any discourse is defined by its relationship to other discourses, relying on them in a complex manner. Intertextual references are presented within a social context, highlighting their role as mechanisms that facilitate change in discourses.

In light of this, the Imam (PBUH) uses verses from the Holy Quran as the central axis of his sermons. This practice imparts a prominent, dynamic, and motivating quality to his discourse. The following is an example of this approach:

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ الْجِهَادَ بَابٌ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَحَهُ اللَّهُ لِخَاصَّةِ أَوْلِيَائِهِ وَهُوَ لِبَاسِ التَّقْوَى وَ دِرْعُ اللَّهِ الْحَصِينَةُ وَ جُنَّةُ الْوَثِيقَةِ. فَمَنْ تَرَكَهُ رَغْبَةً عَنْهُ أَلْبَسَهُ اللَّهُ تَوْبَ الدُّلِّ وَ شِمْلَةَ الْبَلَاءِ وَ دَيْتَ بِالصَّغَارِ وَ الْقَمَاءَةِ وَ ضَرَبَ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ بِالْإِسْهَابِ وَ أُدِيلَ الْحَقُّ مِنْهُ بِتَضْيِيعِ الْجِهَادِ وَ سِيمِ الْحَسْفِ وَ مُعِ النَّصْفِ.

From a sermon that the Commander of the Faithful delivered in which he urged people to perform jihad. He did so when a report reached him about the Anbar being invaded by an army of Mu'awiyah, but the Anbar people did not resist. He mentions the merits of jihad, calling on people to rise, stating his knowledge of wars, and holding people responsible for disobeying him. Now then, surely jihad is one of the doors of Paradise, which Allah has opened for His chief friends. It is the dress of piety and the protective armor of Allah and His trustworthy shield. Whoever abandons it Allah covers him with the dress of disgrace and the clothes of distress. He is kicked with contempt and scorn, and his heart is veiled with screens (of neglect). Truth is taken away from him because of missing jihad. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

The first part of this sermon is an adaptation of verse 26 of Surah Al-A'raf, which mentions the attire of piety.

#### 4.2.3. Explanation

The primary purpose of the explanation stage in critical discourse analysis is to highlight the roles of the description and interpretation stages in producing and reproducing unequal power dynamics, as well as to utilize the findings of critical studies for the liberation of the oppressed. Critical discourse analysis is politically committed to effecting change in this regard, and the analyst must maintain clarity regarding their political and social stance (Mohseni, 2016).

As noted, the political and religious changes following the demise of the Prophet (May Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family) caused the discourse in the words of the Imam (PBUH) to reflect the political oppression that plagued society, alongside the spread of social corruption—an atmosphere that the Kufis themselves, through their ignorance and misbehavior, had helped to create. Here is an example:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ أَمْرِي مَعَكُمْ عَلَى مَا أَحْبَبْتُ حَتَّى نَهَكْتُمْ الْحَرْبَ، وَ قَدْ وَ اللَّهُ أَخَذَتْ مِنْكُمْ وَ تَرَكَتْ وَ هِيَ لِعَدْوِكُمْ أَنَّهُكَ. لَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَمِيرًا، فَأَصْبَحْتُ الْيَوْمَ مَأْمُورًا؛ وَ كُنْتُ أَمِيرًا نَاهِيًا، فَأَصْبَحْتُ الْيَوْمَ مَنهِيًا؛ وَ قَدْ أَحْبَبْتُمُ الْبَقَاءَ، وَ لَيْسَ لِي أَنْ أَحْمِلَكُمْ عَلَى مَا تَكْرَهُونَ.

When Amir al-Mu'minin's companions disputed with him about the issue of arbitration, he said: O' people, matters between me and you went as I wished till war exhausted you. By Allah, it has overtaken some of you and left others, and has completely weakened your enemy. Till yesterday I was giving orders but today I am being given orders, and till yesterday I was dissuading people (from wrong acts) but today I am being dissuaded. You have now shown a liking to live in this world, and it is not for me to bring you to what you dislike. (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

Thus, the Kufis, driven by a tendency toward worldly life, materialism, and fear, laid the groundwork for the rule of corruption and oppression. In every era, it is the behavior of the people that shapes the dominant social characteristics of society and defines the atmosphere of the time (Mohseni, 2016).

### 4.3. Translation strategies

In the second part, the researchers examine five of Berman's translation strategies. While Berman's model includes eleven strategies in total, the researchers focus specifically on the five that are applicable to translation.

#### 4.3.1. Rationalization

This method involves the syntactic structures and punctuation of the original text, with the translator altering the text according to the word order. These changes can include restructuring sentences or modifying punctuation marks, all in accordance with the author's goals and intentions (Ahmadi, 2013).

It is evident that words in any language follow specific logical and rational rules. However, these rules may not hold in translation; thus, one of the translator's key functions is to rationalize the words and align them with the rules of the target language (Delshad, 2015).

Rationalizing speech is essential for a translator aiming to translate Arabic text into English, as the two languages differ significantly in their syntactic structures. Nevertheless, some translators may impose their preferences on these structural changes without justification. Berman considers both types of changes to be distortions of the text.

If the translator maintains the compositional and syntactic features of the source text—elements that are integral to the author's style—and successfully conveys the text's message, then the translator is not at fault. Now, let us examine the following sermons.

فَيَا عَجِبًا عَجِبًا، وَ اللَّهُ يُبِيحُ الْقُلُوبَ وَ يَجْلِبُ الْهَمَّ مِنْ اجْتِمَاعِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ عَلَى بَاطِلِهِمْ وَ تَقَرُّوْكُمْ عَنْ حَقِّكُمْ، فَمُنْبَحًا لَكُمْ وَ تَرَحًا حِينَ صِرْتُمْ غَرَضًا يُرْمَى يُعَارُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ لَا تُغَيِّرُونَ وَ لَا تُغَزُونَ وَ لَا تُغَزُونَ وَ يُعَصَى اللَّهُ وَ تَرْضَوْنَ؛ فَإِذَا أَمَرْتُمْ بِالسَّبْرِ إِلَيْهِمْ فِي أَيَّامِ الْحَرِّ قُلْتُمْ هَذِهِ سَمَاةُ الْقَيْظِ أَمْهَلْنَا يُسَبِّحُ عَنَّا الْحَرُّ وَ إِذَا أَمَرْتُمْ بِالسَّبْرِ إِلَيْهِمْ فِي الشِّتَاءِ قُلْتُمْ هَذِهِ صَبَاةُ الْقَرِّ أَمْهَلْنَا يُسَلِّحُ عَنَّا الْبَرْدُ؛ كُلُّ هَذَا فِرَارًا مِنَ الْحَرِّ وَ الْقَرِّ، فَإِذَا كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْحَرِّ وَ الْقَرِّ تَقْرُونَ فَأَنْتُمْ وَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّيْفِ أَقْر. خ ٢٧

How strange! How strange! By Allah, my heart sinks to see the unity of these people on their wrongs and your dispersion from your right. Woe and grief befall you. You have become the target at which arrows are shot. You are being killed and you do not kill. You are being attacked but you do not attack. Allah is being disobeyed and you remain agreeable to it. When I ask you to move against them in summer you say that it is too hot to spare us till heat subsides from us. When I order you to march in winter, you say it is severely cold, give us time till the cold clears from us. These are just excuses for evading heat and cold because if you run away from heat and cold, you would be, by Allah, running away (in a greater degree) from sword (war) (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

In this translator's work, the order of words in the target language is carefully preserved, ensuring that the intensity and significance of each word are effectively conveyed. For example, in the aforementioned sermon, the word order was correctly maintained from the beginning of the sentence. By closely following the original text, the translator successfully transmitted the power of the words without distorting their meaning.

However, upon closer examination, we find that although the translator could have rendered the text more expressively while adhering to the original, there are instances where personal preference led to overly brief translations. For instance, the phrase “*وَاللَّهِ يُمِيتُ الْقُلُوبَ وَ يَحْلِبُ الْهَمَّ*” was translated as “my heart sinks”. A more faithful translation could be: “This fact kills the human heart and causes sorrow”. This approach would have better captured the essence of the original text while remaining true to its meaning in the target language.

In another example, the phrase “*فَقُبْحًا لَكُمْ وَ تَرَحًّا*” was translated as “woe and grief befall you”, while the term “*قُبْحًا*” explicitly refers to ugliness. A more accurate translation would be: “Ugliness and sorrow be upon you”. Berman argues that such alterations in translation, even if intended for aesthetic reasons, lead to distortion of the original text. A translator must remain faithful to the original text and refrain from altering its words unnecessarily. Now, let us turn our attention to another sermon.

#### 4.3.2. Clarification

Berman considers transparency to be a factor that distorts the original text. Clarification refers to issues in the source text that are unclear or hidden, which the author did not intend to reveal. Enlightenment transparency operates at the level of meaning, while Enlightenment rationalization functions at the level of syntactic structure (Parvar, 2010).

Consequently, translators often instinctively seek to clarify and uncover these hidden layers of meaning. However, the question arises: is transparency beneficial or detrimental? Berman argues that it is preferable to preserve the originality of the source text. He rejects any additional explanations or clarifications, asserting that creativity in translation should serve the purpose of faithfully rewriting the original text in another language rather than providing a clear and transparent translation (Karimian, 2011).

يا أشباه الرجال و لا رجال، خُلُومُ الأَطْفَالِ وَ عُقُولُ رِبَاتِ الحِجَالِ، لَوِدِدْتُ أَنِّي لَمْ أَرُكُمْ وَ لَمْ أَعْرِفْكُمْ مَعْرِفَةً وَ اللّٰهُ جَرَّتْ نَدْمًا وَ أَغْقَبَتْ سَدْمًا. فَاتْلُكُمُ اللّٰهُ لَقَدْ مَلَأْتُمْ قَلْبِي قَيْحًا وَ شَعْنَةً صَدْرِي غَيْظًا وَ جَرَّعْتُمُونِي نَعْبَ التَّهْمَامِ أَنْفَاسًا وَ أَفْسَدْتُمْ عَلَيَّ رَأْيِي بِالْعَضِيَّانِ وَ الخِدْلَانِ، حَتَّى لَقَدْ قَالَتْ فَرِيْشٌ إِنَّ ابْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَجُلٌ شُبَّاعٌ وَ لَكِنْ لَا عِلْمَ لَهُ بِالْحَرْبِ. لِلّٰهِ أَبُوهُمُ! وَ هَلْ أَحَدٌ مِنْهُمْ أَشَدُّ لَهَا مِرَاسًا وَ أَقْدَمُ فِيهَا مَقَامًا مِنِّي؟ لَقَدْ نَهَضْتُ فِيهَا وَ مَا بَلَغْتُ العُشْرَيْنِ وَ هَا أَنَا ذَا قَدْ ذَرَفْتُ عَلَى المِسْتَيْنِ؛ وَ لَكِنْ لَا رَأْيَ لِمَنْ لَا يُطَاع. خ ٢٧

O' you a semblance of men, not men, your intelligence is that of children and your wit is that of the occupants of the curtained canopies (women kept in seclusion from the outside world). I wish I had not seen you nor known you. By Allah, this acquaintance has brought about shame and resulted in repentance. May Allah fight you! You have filled my heart with pus and loaded my bosom with rage. You made me drink mouthfuls of grief one after the other. You shattered my counsel by disobeying and leaving me so much so that Quraysh started saying that the son of Abi Talib is brave but does not know (the tactics of) war. Allah bless them! Is there anyone among them who is fiercer in the war and more experienced in it than I am? I rose for it although yet within the twenties, and here I am, have crossed over sixty, but one who is not obeyed can have no opinion (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

In translating this sermon, the translator made significant efforts to convey the meaning of the original text in the target language. By providing additional explanations in parentheses, the translator clarified the intended meaning. However, the cultural gap between the two languages presents challenges for the target audience, particularly because the concept of a bridal chamber does not exist in the target language's culture. To address



this, the additional explanation describes a woman who is set apart from others and does not associate with anyone. This approach allows the translator to convey the meaning of the original text more effectively. We observe similar instances in sermon 25 as well.

#### 4.3.3. Expansion

The purpose of transparency is to define meaning, while expansion refers to the elaboration of words. The translator's goal is to add content in a way that does not alter the original text but merely increases its volume without adding to its semantic or verbal complexity (Ahmadi, 2013).

Seyyed Alireza, like many translators, employs the expansion method in his translations. However, due to his style, which emphasizes fidelity to the source text, he tends to expand more in terms of word choice rather than overall content. By examining the translations of the following sermons, researchers can explore this issue more clearly.

أَلَا وَإِنِّي قَدْ دَعَوْتُمْ إِلَى قِتَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا وَسِرًّا وَإِعْلَانًا وَقُلْتُ لَكُمْ اغزُوهُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَغزُوهُمْ، فَوَاللَّهِ مَا غَزِيَ قَوْمٌ قَطُّ فِي عَمْرِ دَارِهِمْ إِلَّا دَلُّوا؛ فَتَوَاكَلْتُمْ وَتَحَادَثْتُمْ حَتَّى شُدَّتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَارِثُ وَ مِلَكْتُ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَوْطَانُ. [فَهَذَا] وَ هَذَا أَخُو غَامِدٍ [وَ] قَدْ وَرَدَتْ حَيْبُهُ الْأَنْبَارَ وَ قَدْ قَتَلَ حَسَّانَ بِنَ حَسَّانَ الْبَكْرِيِّ وَ أَرَالَ حَيْكَلَكُمْ عَنْ مَسَالِحِهَا وَ لَقَدْ بَلَّغَنِي أَنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنْهُمْ كَانَ يَدْخُلُ عَلَى الْمَرْأَةِ الْمُسْلِمَةِ وَ الْأُخْرَى الْمَعَاهِدَةَ فَيَنْتَرِعُ حَجَلَهَا وَ فُلَيْهَا وَ قَلَائِدَهَا وَ رُعْبَهَا مَا تَمْتَنِعُ مِنْهُ إِلَّا بِالِاسْتِرْحَامِ وَ الْإِسْتِرْحَامِ، ثُمَّ انْصَرَفُوا وَافِرِينَ مَا نَالَ رَجُلًا مِنْهُمْ كَلْمٌ وَ لَا أَرِيحُ لَهُمْ دَمٌ. فَلَوْ أَنَّ أَمْرًا مُسْلِمًا مَاتَ مِنْ بَعْدِ هَذَا أَسْفًا مَا كَانَ بِهِ مَلُومًا بَلْ كَانَ بِهِ عِنْدِي جَدِيرًا.  
خ ٢٧

Beware! I called you (insistently) to fight these people night and day, secretly and openly, and exhorted you to attack them before they attacked you because by Allah, no people have been attacked in the hearts of their houses but they suffered disgrace. But you put it off to others and forsook it till destruction befell you and your cities were occupied. The horsemen of Banu Ghamid have reached al-Anbar and killed Hassan ibn Hassan al-Bakri. They have removed your horsemen from the garrison. I have come to know that every one of them entered upon Muslim women and other women under the protection of Islam and took away their ornaments from legs, arms, necks, and ears and no woman could resist it except by pronouncing the verse, “We are for Allah and to Him we shall return” (Qur’an, 2: 156) Then they got back laden with wealth without any wound or loss of life. If any Muslim dies of grief after all this he is not to be blamed but rather there is justification for him before me. (Seyyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

In translating the twenty-seventh sermon of Nahj al-Balaghah, the translator added the word “insistence” in parentheses, even though it does not have a direct equivalent in the original text. This addition aimed to help readers better understand the context of that day and grasp the subject more effectively. However, Berman considers such expansions to be a form of distortion, arguing that any additions to the translation, even if they do not alter the content, still constitute a distortion of the original meaning.

Despite this critique, Seyyed Ali Reza’s addition enhanced the beauty of the text and more effectively conveyed the meaning of the Imam (PBUH). Importantly, this action did not detract from the content; rather, Seyyed Alireza sought to clarify and elaborate on aspects that the Imam (PBUH) did not explicitly state.

#### 4.4. Qualitative impoverishment

Qualitative attenuation refers to the process of equating words, phrases, and structures from the source text with those that fail to convey their phonetic, semantic, and symbolic richness (Berman, 2010). Achieving semantic equivalence between the words and phrases of a translation and those of the original text has always been a primary concern for literary translators. However, this ideal has never been fully realized, particularly in the translation of religious texts (Rahimi Khoigani, 1982).

For instance, the repetition of phrases such as (SA) in a sermon can create puns, and if these are not conveyed in the target text, the phonetic richness is diminished. In this section, the researchers focus exclusively on instances where puns exist in the original sermon but are absent in the translator's version. In reviewing sermon 192 of Nahj al-Balaghah, we examine the following example.

أَقْوَمَكُمْ عُذْوَةٌ وَ تَرْجِعُونَ إِلَيَّ عَشِيَّةً كَظَهْرِ الْحَيَّةِ، عَجَزَ الْمُقْوَمُ وَ أَعْصَلَ الْمُقْوَمُ. خ ٩٧

The straightener has become weary while those to be straightened have become incorrigible. (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401)

In this part of the sermon, the use of similar homogeneous words facilitates a better understanding of the overall content, which in turn evokes a sense of pleasure. Although the translator has struggled to convey the beauty of the language, such as its phonetic richness, he has made every effort to express its intended meaning. Undoubtedly, this shortcoming is not the translator's fault, as the specific structure of speech is unique to the Arabic language. The significant differences between Arabic and the target language make it challenging for the translator to capture this aspect of the word's beauty. Regardless, Berman views this disparity between the original text and its translation as a form of distortion that reflects the translator's unfaithfulness to the original work.

#### 4.5. Quantitative impoverishment

Quantitative weakening refers to the reduction of words and phrases from the original text in the translation (Berman, 2010). In this case, the translator eliminates words without adequate justification. A single word can have multiple meanings, and a phrase may contain several words with different interpretations. If the author includes all meanings, the translation may become problematic; therefore, the translator must choose the most appropriate meaning. According to Berman, this process results in slight weakening of the translation.

Given the extensive vocabulary in Nahj al-Balaghah, studying the semantic fields of words presents a new area for research. One notable example is the word 'camel' and its related terms. The Bedouin people's deep affection for this animal has led the Arabs to develop specific words for its various states and characteristics.

In Nahj al-Balaghah, Imam Ali (PBUH) employs the word 'camel' and its derivatives with varied interpretations. The significance and prevalence of camels in people's lives necessitated the Imam's use of these terms in appropriate contexts, such as to discuss topics like caliphate and sedition. In this section, researchers utilize Berman's Quantitative Impoverishment strategy to analyze the different names for camels in the sermons. However, the translator failed to find suitable equivalents in the target language and resorted to using

a single term to refer to all variations of the word ‘camel’. Next, we will examine five sermons in which the Imam (PBUH) directly rebukes the Kufis using the term ‘camel’ analyzing them through the lens of Berman's quantitative impoverishment model.

مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا كَالْبَيْلِ صَلَّى رِعَائُهَا فَكَلَّمَا جُمِعَتْ مِنْ جَانِبٍ انْتَشَرَتْ مِنْ آخَرَ. خ ٣٤

Your example is that of camels whose protector has disappeared, so when they are collected from one side, they disperse from the other (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

دَعَوْتُمْ إِلَى نَصْرِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ فَجَرَجَرْتُمْ جَرْجَرَ الْجَمَلِ الْأَسْرِ وَ تَنَاقَلْتُمْ تَنَاقُلَ النَّصْوِ الْأَذْبَرِ. خ ٣٩

I called you for the help of your brethren but made noises like the camel having pain in the stomach, and became loose like the camel of thin back (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

كَمْ أَدَارِيكُمْ كَمَا تَدَارَى الْبَكَارُ الْعَمِيدَةُ وَ التِّيَابُ الْمَتَدَاعِيَةُ، كَلَّمَا حَيْصَتْ مِنْ جَانِبٍ تَهْتَكَتْ مِنْ آخَرَ. خ ٦٩

How long shall I accord you consideration that is accorded to camels with hollow hump, or to Worn clothes which when stitched on one side give way on the other (Seyed Ali Reza, 1980.1401).

وَ اللَّهُ مَا بَصُرْتُمْ بَعْدَهُمْ شَيْئًا يَجْمَلُوهُ وَ لَا أُضْفِيْتُمْ بِهِ وَ حُرْمُوهُ وَ لَقَدْ نَزَلَتْ بِكُمْ الْبَلِيَّةُ جَانِبًا خَطَامُهَا رِخْوًا بَطَانُهَا فَلَا يُعَزَّتْكُمْ مَا أَصْبَحَ فِيهِ أَهْلُ الْغُرُورِ فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ ظِلٌّ مَمْدُودٌ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مَعْدُودٍ. خ ٨٩

By Allah, you have not been told anything that they did not know and you have not been given anything which they were deprived of. Certainly, you have been afflicted by a calamity (which is like a she-camel) whose nose-string is moving about and whose strap is loose. So in whatever condition these deceitful people are should not deceive you, because it is just a long shadow whose term is fixed. (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401)

وَ أَيْمُ اللَّهِ لَتَجِدَنَّ بَنِي أُمَّيَّةَ لَكُمْ أَرْبَابَ سُوءٍ بَعْدِي كَالنَّابِ الصَّرُوسِ تَعْدُمُ فِيهَا وَ تَخْطُ بِبَيْدِهَا وَ تَرْتِنُ بِرِجْلِهَا وَ تَمْنَعُ دَرَّهَا، لَا يَزَالُونَ بِكُمْ حَتَّى لَا يَبْرُكُوا مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا نَافِعًا لَهُمْ أَوْ غَيْرَ صَائِرٍ بِهِمْ وَ لَا يَزَالُ بَلَاؤُهُمْ عَنْكُمْ حَتَّى لَا يَكُونَ انْتِصَارُ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا كَانْتِصَارِ الْعَبْدِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَ الصَّاحِبِ مِنْ مُسْتَضْحَبِهِ. خ ٩٣

By Allah, you will find Banu Umayyah after me worst people for yourselves, like the old unruly she-camel who bites with its mouth, beats with its forelegs, kicks with its hind legs, and refuses to be milked (Seyed Ali Reza.1980.1401).

As can be seen in the translation of the sermons, the translator used the term she-camel or camel for all words related to camels, while in Arabic each word describes a specific species of camel. And that in English we do not have the categories of females and males as in Arabic for animals and we rarely see such cases. In any case, due to cultural differences between the two languages and the lack of a suitable equivalent, the translator cannot be criticized. Such a translation is unacceptable by Berman.

### 5. Findings

The results of the present study, based on the Fairclough model, are examined in three separate sections, described below.

Table 1. Percentages of critical discourse analysis types based on the Fairclough model

Different kind of discourse analysis	Number	Percentage
Description	15	65 %
Interpretation	6	26%
Explanation	2	9%
Whole	23	100%

Table 1 presents the frequencies of different types of critical discourse analysis based on Fairclough's model. The data indicates that the description stage is the most prevalent, with a frequency of 65%, followed by the interpretation stage at 26%. Additionally, the explanation stage has the lowest frequency, accounting for only 9% of the discourse analysis types used in the translation of Nahj al-Balaghah sermons by Seyyed Ali Reza.

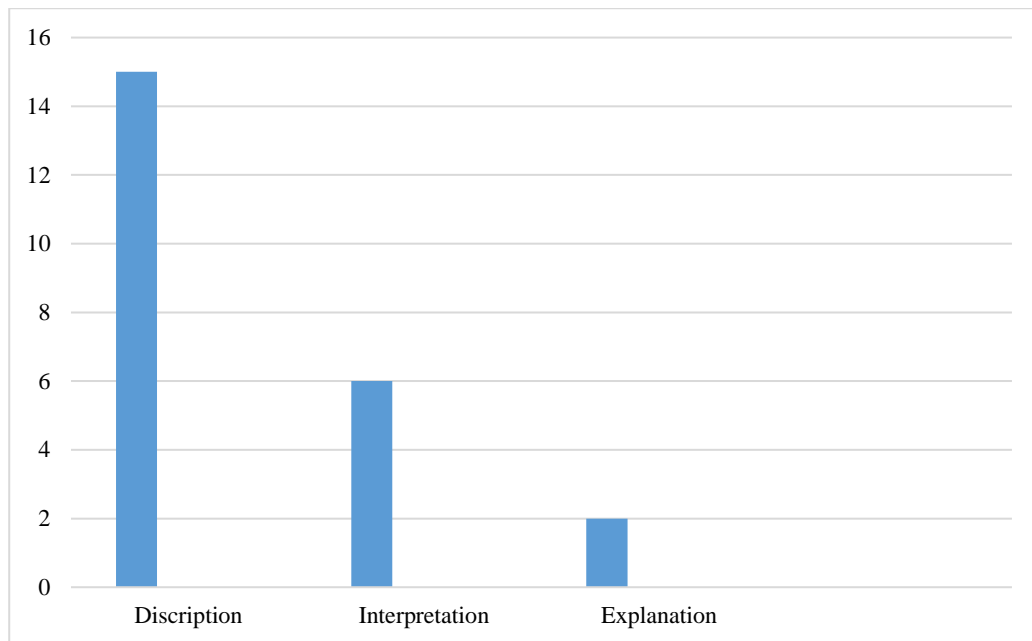


Figure 1. Number of types of discourse analysis

Figure 1. illustrates the frequency of each type of discourse analysis. The description stage is the most common, while the explanation stage is the least frequent type of discourse analysis found in the Nahj al-Balaghah sermons.

Table 2. Percentages of critical discourse analysis types based on the Fairclough model

Different kind of translation strategies	Number	Percentage
Rationalization	2	8%
Clarification	8	33%
Expansion	7	29%
Qualitative impoverishment	2	8%
Quantitative impoverishment	5	21%
Total	24	100%

Table 2. presents the frequencies of different translation strategies based on the Berman model. The data indicates that clarification is the most common strategy, with a frequency of 33%, followed by expansion at 29%. Additionally, rationalization and qualitative impoverishment are the least frequent strategies, each accounting for only 8% of the total.

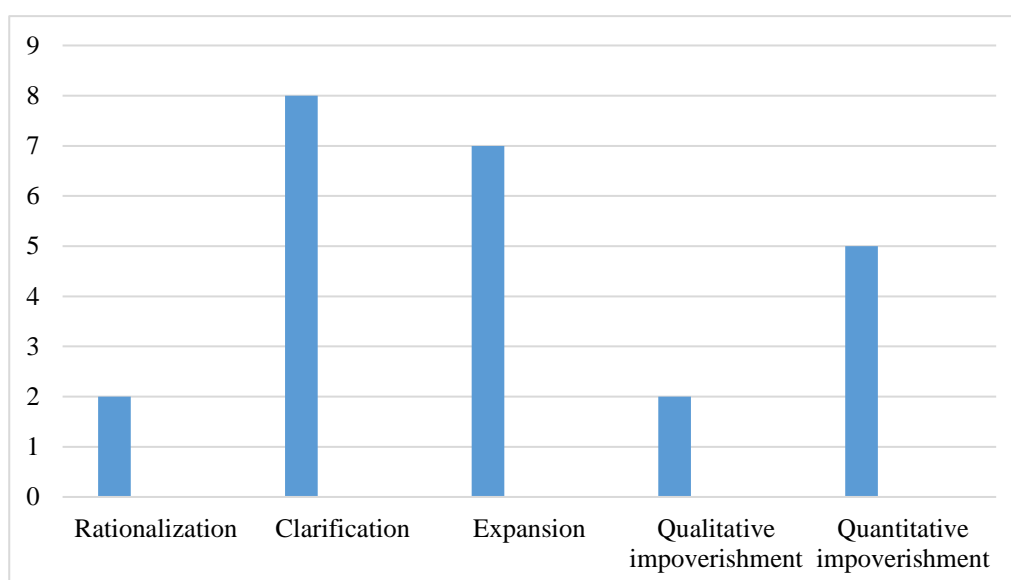


Figure 2. Percentages of types of translation strategies

Figure 2. illustrates the percentages of different translation strategies. It shows that the most frequent strategy is clarification, with a frequency of 34%, while rationalization and qualitative impoverishment are the least frequent, each accounting for only 8%.

### 5.1 Rationalization

In this study, an example of translation strategies was extracted, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Translation strategies for Rationalization

Sermon	Translation
<p>فَيَا عَجَبًا عَجَبًا، وَاللَّهِ يُبَيِّتُ الْقَلْبَ وَ يَجْلِبُ الْهَمَّ مِنْ اجْتِمَاعِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ عَلَى بَاطِلِهِمْ وَ تَفَرُّقِكُمْ عَنْ حَقِّكُمْ، فَشُبْحًا لَكُمْ وَ تَرَحًّا خ٢٧.</p>	<p>How strange! How strange! By Allah, <u>my heart sinks</u> to see the unity of these people on their wrong and your dispersion from your right. <u>Woe and grief</u> befall you.</p>

### 5.2 Clarification

In this study, two examples of translation strategies were identified, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Translation strategies for Clarification

Sermon	Translation
<p>يَا أَشْبَاهَ الرِّجَالِ وَلَا رِجَالَ، جُلُومُ الْأَطْفَالِ وَ عُقُولُ رِبَاتِ الْحِجَالِ، لَوَدِدْتُ أَيُّ لَمْ أَرُكُمْ وَ لَمْ أَعْرِفْكُمْ مَعْرِفَةً وَ اللَّهُ جَرَّتْ نَدْمًا وَ أَعْقَبَتْ سَدَمًا. خ ٢٧</p>	<p>O' you a semblance of men, not men, your intelligence is that of children and your wit is that of the occupants of the curtained canopies (women kept in seclusion from the outside world).</p>
<p>وَ تَمَثَّلَ بِقَوْلِ الشَّاعِرِ: لَعَمْرُ أَبِيكَ الْخَيْرِ يَا عَمْرُو أَيُّ عَلَى وَضْرٍ مِنْ ذَا الْإِنَاءِ قَلِيلِ خ ٢٥</p>	<p>Omar. By your good father's life. I have received only a small bit of fat from this pot (fat that remains sticking to it after it has been emptied).</p>

### 5.3 Expansion

In this study, two examples were extracted under translation strategies which will be shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Translation strategies for Expansion

Sermon	Translation
<p>أَلَا وَ إِنِّي قَدْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ إِلَى قِتَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَيْلًا وَ نَهَارًا وَ سِرًّا وَ إِعْلَانًا وَ قُلْتُ لَكُمْ اغزُّوهُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَغزُّوكُمْ، فَوَاللَّهِ مَا غزِي قَوْمٌ قَطُّ فِي غُفْرٍ دَارِهِمْ إِلَّا دَلُّوا؛ فَتَوَاكَلْتُمْ وَ تَخَادَلْتُمْ حَتَّى شَدَّتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْغَارَاتُ وَ مُلِكَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْأَوْطَانُ. خ ٢٧</p>	<p>Beware! I called you (<u>insistently</u>) to fight these people night and day, secretly and openly, and exhorted you to attack them before they attacked you because by Allah, no people have been attacked in the hearts of their houses but they suffered disgrace.</p>
<p>مَا أَنْتُمْ لِي بِبَيْتَةٍ سَجِيسِ اللَّيَالِي وَ مَا أَنْتُمْ بِرُكْنٍ يُمَالُ بِكُمْ وَ لَا زَوَائِرِ عِزٍّ يُفْتَقَرُ إِلَيْكُمْ. مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا كَالْبِلْبَالِ ضَلَّ رِعَاتُهَا فَكَلَّمَا جُمِعَتْ مِنْ جَانِبٍ انْتَشَرَتْ مِنْ آخَرَ. لَيْسَ لَعَمْرُ اللَّهِ سُعْرُ نَارِ الْحَرْبِ أَنْتُمْ، تُكَادُونَ وَ لَا تَكِيدُونَ وَ تُنْتَقِصُ أَطْرَافُكُمْ فَلَا تَمْتَعِضُونَ. لَا يَنَامُ عَنْكُمْ وَ أَنْتُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ سَاهُونَ. خ ٣٤</p>	<p>I have lost my confidence in you for good. Neither are you a support for me to lean upon, nor a means to honor and victory. Your example is that of the camels whose protector has disappeared, so when they are collected from one side they disperse from the other. By Allah, how bad are you for igniting the flames of war You are intrigued against but you are not intrigue (<u>against the enemy</u>). Your boundaries are decreasing but you do not get enraged over it. Those who are against you do not sleep while you remain unmindful.</p>

### 5.4 Qualitative impoverishment

In this study, 2 examples for this type of were found translation strategies in the following Table 6.

Table 6. Translation strategies for Qualitative impoverishment

Sermon	Translation
فَاعْتَبِرُوا بِمَا كَانَ مِنْ فِعْلِ اللَّهِ يَا بَلِيسَ إِذْ أَحْبَطَ عَمَلَهُ الطَّوِيلَ وَ جَهْدَهُ الْجَهِيدَ وَ كَانَ قَدْ عَبَدَ اللَّهَ سِتَّةَ آلَافِ سِنِينَ. خ ١٩٢	You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; when he nullified his great acts and extensive efforts, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years – whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known, on account of the vanity of one hour.
أَقْوَمُكُمْ عُذُوَّةً وَ تَرْجِعُونَ إِلَيَّ عَشِيَّةً كَطَلْحِ الْحَنِيَّةِ، عَجَزَ الْمُقَوْمُ وَ أَعْضَلَ الْمُقَوْمُ. خ ٩٧	The straightener has become weary while those to be straightened have become incorrigible.

### 5.5 Quantitative impoverishment

In this study, two instances of the Quantitative Impoverishment strategy were identified, as presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Translation strategies for Quantitative impoverishment

Sermons	Translation
مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا كَالْبَيْلِ صَلَّى رِعَابُهَا فَكَلَّمَا جُمِعَتْ مِنْ جَانِبٍ انْتَشَرَتْ مِنْ آخَرَ. خ ٣٤	Your example is that of camels whose protectors have disappeared, so when they are collected from one side, they disperse from the other.
دَعَوْتُمْ إِلَى نَصْرِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ فَجَزَجْتُمْ جَزَجَةَ الْجَمَلِ الْأَسْرِ وَ تَتَأَلَّمُونَ تَتَأَلَّمُ النَّصُورُ الْأَدْبَرِ. خ ٣٩	I called you for the help of your brethren but you made noises like the camel having pain in its stomach and became loose like the camel of thin back.

## 6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to evaluate the compatibility of the translated text of a section of Nahj al-Balaghah that explicitly critiques the people of Kufa. After analyzing the translation of these sermons alongside reputable interpretations, the researchers concluded that the translator effectively conveyed the Imam's message through discourse, demonstrating considerable success in this regard. The use of established interpretations was necessary due to the researchers' inability to engage in an in-depth interpretation of the sermons, as they were not in a position to provide such analysis. To verify the compatibility of the translated discourse with the original text, it was essential to rely on a credible source.

A lack of fidelity in translation can result in the introduction of inaccuracies, which may distort the sanctity of these texts. According to Berman's (2010) model, Seyed Ali Reza's translation stands out as one of the most faithful and least problematic translations. By

comparing five factors of text distortion in Reza's translation, the researchers observed minimal distortions, making it one of the most faithful renderings of Nahj al-Balaghah, successfully preserving the language, style, and meaning of the Imam's words.

Further research could explore additional strategies used in translating Nahj al-Balaghah. This study focused on only five of the eleven strategies outlined in Berman's model, leaving the remaining six open for investigation by future researchers. Additionally, other sermons, letters, and the wisdom of the Imam (PBUH) in Nahj al-Balaghah could be analyzed through a discourse analysis approach.

The findings of this study may be valuable for English language teachers and students interested in translation studies, particularly in the translation of sacred and historically significant texts. Postgraduate students in translation studies can also benefit from the strategies outlined by Fairclough (1998) and Berman (2010), applying them to their own research. Moreover, translators seeking to work in the field of religious texts can gain insights from this study, which may enhance their understanding and improve their success in translating such works.

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