




A Comparative Analysis of English Translations of Idioms in Selected Verses of Surah al-Mumtaḥanah (The Woman Tested) and Surah al-Saff (The Ranks) Based on Schleiermacher's Framework

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ABSTRACT

Islam, as the final and most comprehensive religion, offers a divine plan for a purposeful and prosperous life. It has continued to spread through the Glorious Qur'ān and the Straight Path of Ahlul-Bayt, divine peace be upon them. When reading the Qur'ān, figurative language often presents challenges, as readers may encounter ambiguity in understanding its message and religious teachings. Therefore, the accurate translation of Qur'ānic idioms is of utmost importance. However, existing English translations sometimes diverge from the source text, with idiomatic expressions being a key source of such discrepancies. Thus, comparing different translations of Qur'ānic idioms based on scientific principles of translation is essential. This study examines the interpretations and English translations of idioms found in verse 12 of Surah al-Mumtaḥanah and verse 8 of Surah al-Saff in the Noble Qur'ān. To achieve this, translations by prominent scholars were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring a variety of translation methods. Seventeen translations were analyzed for Surah al-Saff and thirteen for Surah al-Mumtaḥanah. Given the descriptive nature of this research, the study aimed to identify and explain the methods used by these translators. The theoretical foundation of this research is based on Friedrich Schleiermacher's (2012) translation methods, followed by an evaluation of the translations using Waddington's (2001) holistic model of translation quality assessment. Finally, based on the observed strengths and weaknesses of the translations, new versions of the verses were proposed, designed to be more comprehensible and appealing to younger generations.

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1. Introduction

The Noble Qur'ān is a divine book of guidance, revealed by Allah, Jalla Jalaaluhu, to lead humanity. As it is not limited to a specific nation, it must be translated into all languages of the world. However, the presence of complex figures of speech, idiomatic expressions, and multiple layers of meaning makes translation a challenging task. Figurative language serves as an effective tool for enhancing brevity, expanding linguistic expression, and stimulating imagination (Abdelaziz, 2018, p. 9). Additionally, rhetorical elements play a crucial role in utilizing figures of speech, strengthening expressiveness, creating vivid and emphatic effects, and evoking deep contemplation and emotional responses in the audience.

The Collins Cobuild English Dictionary defines figurative language as “the skill or art of using language effectively” (Forsyth, 2014, p. 1427). In his translation, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, Asad describes the Noble Qur'ān as “unique and untranslatable,” emphasizing that the profound organic interconnection between its meaning and linguistic expression forms an inseparable whole (Asad, 1980, p. v).

Others, such as Iqbal, argue that the Glorious Qur'ān is an untranslatable text. However, despite this, numerous translations of this divine book exist in various languages. Each translation is influenced by the translator's financial and socio-political circumstances, as well as their intellectual and spiritual perspectives (Iqbal, 2004, pp. 281-296). Abdul-Raof (2001) asserts that the translation of the Holy Qur'ān should not be seen as a substitute for the original Arabic text, emphasizing that “we cannot produce a Latin Qur'ān, no matter how accurate or professional the translator attempts to be” (p. 28).

Abdul-Raof (2001) presents two key reasons. First, Qur'ānic expressions and structures “cannot be reproduced in an equivalent manner to the original in terms of structure, mystical effect on the reader, and intentionality of the source text” (p. 28). Second, the divine nature of the Noble Qur'ān as the Word of Allah “cannot be reproduced by the word of man” (p. 28). Abdul-Raof emphasizes that “the beauty of the Qur'ān-specific language and style surpasses man's faculty to reproduce the Qur'ān in a translated form” (Abdul-Raof, 2001, pp. 1-2).

Similarly, Pickthall underscores that an English translation of the Qur'ān “is not the Glorious Qur'ān: that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move humans to tears and ecstasy. Translation is only a small attempt to present part of the meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān—and, peradventure, something of the charm in English. It can, therefore, never take the place of the Noble Qur'ān in the original Arabic, nor is it meant to do so” (Pickthall, 1999, p. vii).

However, Manafi Anari argues that although much of the divine instruction and the exquisitely unique style of the Holy Qur'ān are lost in translation, a careful and precise translation can still serve as a means for the target language (TL) audience to gain insight into Allah's revelations (Manafi Anari, 2003, p. 35). This study is a semantic-pragmatic analysis that examines Schleiermacher's translation approaches to assess 17 translations of selected Qur'ānic idioms. The translations are evaluated using Waddington's holistic model, and ultimately, more comprehensible translations of five Qur'ānic idioms are proposed for the younger generation.

In today's era of globalization, modern communication technology has brought the world's cultures closer together, making them more accessible. As a result, writers must

address a universal audience with universally understood features, which enhances the translatability of texts. The primary objectives of this study are to analyze Schleiermacher's translation approaches in 17 translations of two key Qur'ānic idioms, evaluate these translations using Waddington's holistic model, and ultimately propose clearer, more comprehensible translations for the younger generation, based on the identified strengths and weaknesses of the existing translations.

This study investigates diverse translations of the Qur'ān to identify strategies for improving the quality of religious translation, with a specific focus on the rhetorical structures and figurative language inherent in the Qur'ānic text. The ultimate aim is to offer a deeper understanding of Qur'ānic idioms and their intended semantic import.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Previous Research

Numerous studies have explored Qur'ānic figures of speech, examining various aspects of this subject. Koorani (2012) analyzed the strategies used by Iranian lexicographers when translating proverbs, as well as the most frequently applied strategies in bilingual English-Persian dictionaries, including *Hezareh* (The Millennium) and *Pooya*. Heidarzadeh (2016) investigated fifty Qur'ānic proverbs, focusing on the rhetorical devices employed in each. Khalaf (2016), in his study *Translation of Explicit Qur'ānic Proverbs and Their Rhetorics into English*, conducted a comparative analysis of four English translations of the Glorious Qur'ān.

His research examined these translations from linguistic, literary, and translational perspectives to highlight the creativity and rhetorical depth of Qur'ānic proverbs. The corpus of his study consisted of 52 Qur'ānic proverbs.

Zolfaghari (2008) defined the concept of 'Kenāyeh' and clarified the distinctions between 'Kenāyeh,' 'Darb-ul-Mathal,' metonymy, and metaphor. He also provided criteria to differentiate these figures of speech. Additionally, Nasiri (2014) analyzed 16 Qur'ānic verses containing Kenāyeh and examined the functions of this figure of speech in the Noble Qur'ān. Khaleghian (2014) explored the possibility of transferring the sound devices of the Holy Qur'ān into English, both in poetic and non-poetic translations.

Her study focused specifically on the sound devices in Chapter 30 of the Qur'ān. She compared three types of translations: poetic translation by Nikayin, stylistic translation by Arberry, and explanatory translation by Yusuf Ali.

Aldahesh (2014), in his work, provided a comprehensive overview of untranslatability as a key concept in translation studies, with a particular focus on the issue of the Glorious Qur'ān's untranslatability. He first explored the concept of untranslatability as addressed by linguists and translation theorists. He then examined various perspectives offered by Muslim intellectuals regarding the untranslatability of the Qur'ān, and finally, he analyzed the views of prominent English translators of the Noble Qur'ān on this matter.

Al-Badrani (2013) studied the translation of the word "Asa" in the Glorious Qur'ān into English. He reviewed how different translators had rendered the term and, based on established Qur'ānic interpretations, proposed corrections to the translations of the selected verses.

2.2. Translation Strategies in the Context of *Qur'ān* Translation

A deeper exploration into the history of translation methods reveals two primary approaches for translating *Qur'ānic* idioms: literal and free translation. In the literal approach, the unit of translation is typically the word or sentence. In the free approach, the translator focuses on the meaning of the *Qur'ānic* utterances and their application in the target language, or may offer interpretations of the *Qur'ānic* idioms. Historically, we find that Jerome and Cicero rejected word-for-word translation in favor of sense-for-sense translation (Munday, 2016, p. 31).

Vinay and Darbelnet framework for translation strategies distinguishes between two primary approaches: direct and oblique translation. Direct translation encompasses three procedures: borrowing, calque, and literal translation. Oblique translation comprises four procedures: transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. (Munday, 2016, pp. 88-91). Baker (1992, pp. 72-78) outlines several strategies for translating idioms, which can be summarized as follows:

- Using an idiom of similar meaning and form: This involves finding an idiom in the target language that closely matches the meaning and structure of the source language idiom.
- Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form: In this case, the translator seeks an idiom in the target language that conveys the same meaning as the source language idiom, but uses a different structure or wording.
- Paraphrasing: This strategy involves explaining the meaning of the idiom in plain language, often resulting in a loss of the figurative or idiomatic nuance.
- Omission: If an idiom has no close equivalent in the target language and paraphrasing is impractical or awkward, the translator may choose to omit the idiom altogether.

According to Newmark (1988, pp. 284-5), semantic and communicative translation are the two primary approaches to translation. When translating the Holy *Qur'ān*, he emphasizes the importance of selecting a strategy that avoids:

- Distorting or losing the original meaning: This refers to ensuring the translation accurately reflects the source text's meaning and avoids misinterpretations.
- Overtranslation: This occurs when the translator adds unnecessary details or explanations not present in the original text.
- Undertranslation: This describes a translation that is too general or lacks the specific details and nuances of the original text.

As Munday explains, House (2014, p. 45) developed her model based on a comparative ST–TT analysis, which involves assessing translation quality by identifying ‘mismatches’ or ‘errors’. The steps in this process are as follows:

- A profile of the ST register is created, including a description of the ST genre.

- The function of the ST, including both ideational and interpersonal aspects, is identified.
- The same process is then applied to the TT.
- The TT profile is compared with the ST profile, and errors are identified.
- Errors related to register and genre are referred to as ‘covertly erroneous errors’, while denotative mismatches, such as grammatical or lexical errors, are classified as ‘overtly erroneous errors.’
- Finally, the translation is categorized as either ‘overt translation’ or ‘covert translation’.

Schleiermacher identified two possible approaches for the ‘true’ translator: “Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him, or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him” (Schleiermacher, 2004, p. 49). He refers to these two approaches as alienation and naturalization, respectively.

Baker, on the other hand, suggests the following strategies for translating idioms:

- Using an idiom with a similar meaning and form.
- Using an idiom with a similar meaning but a different form.
- Paraphrasing, where the expression is often simplified to its basic sense, leading to translation loss.
- Omission, if the idiom has no close equivalent and paraphrasing is either difficult or results in a clumsy style (Baker, 1992, pp. 72-78).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Procedure

In this study, a descriptive-comparative method was used to analyze and interpret how a specific idiom is handled by different translators. The research relied on library studies and manual idiom extraction techniques. The procedure for conducting the study was as follows. First, books, articles, and theses on Qur’ānic figures of speech were consulted to compile a list of Qur’ānic verses containing figurative language. Second, Qur’ānic idioms were identified from this list based on their rhetorical definitions provided by experts, as discussed in other sections of the article.

Third, a selection of thirteen English translations from Surah al-Mumtaḥanah and seventeen from Surah al-Şaff was prepared, sourced from www.tanzil.net, to be analyzed according to Schleiermacher’s translation theory and Waddington’s TQA model. Fourth, Arabic source books were used to examine the literary meanings of Arabic figurative expressions with similar counterparts in English.

Fifth, Persian and Arabic exegesis books on the Noble Qur'ān were consulted to determine the authoritative interpretations of prominent exegetes concerning the selected Qur'ānic idioms. Sixth, the English translations of the Qur'ān available on Tanzil.net were reviewed and compared. The translations rendered by the selected translators were analyzed according to Schleiermacher's framework and Waddington's TQA model. Finally, the analysis of the selected English translations was completed, with strengths and weaknesses identified. Based on this, two suggestions were offered for the idioms, drawing on Schleiermacher's two approaches, in order to produce a higher-quality and more fluent translation for the intended audience.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

Schleiermacher's model of translation (2012) has been used as the theoretical framework of the study. Naturalization and Alienation are two translation extremes that he used to analyze translations both as product and process. Waddington's model of translation quality assessment (Model C) was also applied to mark the translations based on the degree of the accuracy of conveying the SL message and the fluency of expressing the message in the TL.

Table 1. The Scale of Holistic Method C (Schleiermacher, 2012)

Level	Accuracy of ST content transfer	Quality of expression in the TL	Degree of task completion	Mark
Level 5	Complete transfer of ST information; only minor revision needed to reach professional standard.	Almost all the translation reads like a piece originally written in English. There may be minor lexical, grammatical or spelling errors.	Successful	9-10
Level 4	Almost complete transfer; there may be one or two insignificant inaccuracies; requires certain amount of revision to reach professional standard.	Large sections read like a piece originally written in English. There are a number of lexical, grammatical or spelling errors.	Almost completely successful	7-8
Level 3	Transfer of the general idea(s) but with a number of lapses in accuracy; needs considerable revision to reach professional standard	Certain parts read like a piece originally written in English, but others read like a translation. There are a considerable number of lexical grammatical or spelling errors	Adequate	5-6
Level 2	Transfer undermined by serious inaccuracies; thorough revision required to reach professional standard.	Almost the entire text reads like a translation; there are continual lexical, grammatical or spelling errors.	Inadequate	3-4
Level 1	Totally inadequate transfer of ST content; the translation is not worth revising.	The candidate reveals a total lack of ability to express himself adequately in English	Totally inadequate	1-2

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Analysis of Translations of Qur'ānic Idioms (60:12).

The following ayah (verse) was analyzed: “وَلَا يَأْتِيَنَّ بِهِمَا يَنْفَرْتَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلَيْهِمْ”. The above verse was descended at the time when Holy Prophet Muhammad (divine peace upon him and his Household) came to Mecca and the believers came for allegiance. The following verse concerns the allegiance of believing women, according to which, the believing women pledged not to commit a number of sins, including killing their children out of the fear of poverty, committing adultery, becoming pregnant illegitimately, slandering, etc.

The following verse refers to one of the sins that the believing women promised not to commit (Mughniya, 2004, p. 307).

Table 2. Translations of Qur'ānic idioms (60:12)

وَلَا يَأْتِيَنَّ بِهِمَا يَنْفَرْتَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلَيْهِمْ		
1	Ahmed Ali	nor accuse others for what they have fabricated themselves
2	Ahmed Raza Khan	nor bring the lie that they carry between their hands and feet
3	Arberry	nor bring a calumny they forge between their hands and their feet
4	Asad	and would not indulge in slander, falsely devising it out of nothingness
5	Helali & Khan	that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood (i.e. by making illegal children belonging to their husbands)
6	Maududi	that they will not bring forth a calumny between their hands and feet
7	Pickthall	nor produce any lie that they have devised between their hands and feet
8	Qarai	nor utter any slander that they may have intentionally fabricated
9	Qaribullah & Darwish	nor fabricate slander between their hands and their feet
10	Sahih International	nor will they bring forth a slander they have invented between their arms and legs
11	Sarwar	or to bring false charges against anyone (such as ascribing others children to their husbands)
12	Shakir	and will not bring a calumny which they have forged of themselves
13	Yusuf Ali	that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood

Interpretational Analysis: Based on the Qur'ānic exegeses referenced, most translations offer similar interpretations of the selected verse.

Exegeses-Based Definitions

Al-Mizān Exegesis explains that this verse advises believing women to avoid becoming pregnant illegitimately and falsely attributing the child to their husbands. This act is considered a sin, involving both lying and slander, committed through their own actions (Tabatabai, 1974, p. 242).

The Kāshif Exegesis suggests that the verse refers to women's wombs, which are metaphorically located between their hands and feet. It further explains that women should not deceive their husbands by falsely claiming pregnancy or by engaging in illicit pregnancies and attributing them to their husbands (Mughniya, 2004, p. 307).

Aḥsan al-Ḥadīth exegesis was also referred to: the verse also alludes to childbirth, where the child emerges between a woman's feet, which is why the reference is made to feet in the verse (Qurashi, 2012, p. 133).

Summation: As evident from the interpretations provided, despite varying reasons, the core meaning of this verse revolves around 'women committing adultery and falsely accusing their husbands of this occurrence'.

Linguistic Analysis: The analysis has been displayed in Tables 3 and 4. According to Table 3, with the translations using the alienating method listed, there are four key terms in the verse. The translations of these four key terms vary from one translator to another. The first term is 'ya'tīna bi', for which the translators have used five different equivalents.

Almaany Arabic English Dictionary defines this verb as 'advance, bring, bring forward, present, introduce, produce' (Almaany, n.d.).

Hans Wehr Arabic English Dictionary, on the other hand, mentions the following equivalents for this verb: 'to bring, bring forward, produce, advance, accomplish, do, perform, carry out, execute, offer, commit' (Cowan, 1976).

Table 3. Translations Employing Alienating Method

كَلِمَةٌ	يَأْتِيَنَّ بِ	مُهْتَانٍ	يَقْتَرِبْنَ	أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَأَرْجُلَهُنَّ
between their hands and feet	bring	lie	carry	between their hands and feet
between their arms and legs	utter	calumny	forged	between their arms and legs
	produce	falsehood	fabricate	
	bring forth	slander	devise	
	fabricate	False charges	invent	

Table 4. Translations Employing Naturalizing Method

وَلَا يَأْتِيَنَّ بِهِنَّ مِهْتَانٍ	يَقْتَرِبْنَ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَأَرْجُلَهُنَّ
nor accuse others	they have fabricated themselves
and would not indulge in slander	falsely devising it out of nothingness
or to bring false charges against anyone (such as ascribing others children to their husbands)	intentionally forging falsehood (i.e., by making illegal children belonging to their husbands)
nor commit perjury	as to parenthood
nor utter any slander	which they have forged of themselves
and will not bring a calumny	intentionally inventing falsehoods

Dictionary-Based Analyses: The Longman Contemporary Dictionary defines “fabricate” as “to invent a story or piece of information to deceive someone” (Longman, 2014). However, the challenge lies in finding the most appropriate collocation for the term “Buhtān,” which is our second key concept. According to the first table, translators have used four different equivalents for this notion, including “lie,” “calumny,” “falsehood,” and “slander”.

The most accurate approach is to refer to the Longman Dictionary and identify verbs that commonly collocate with these four nouns, while also capturing the intended meaning of the verse (Longman, 2014). According to this dictionary, the noun “lie” pairs with several verbs, with “tell,” “give,” and “spread” being the most compatible with the meaning of the source text.

Since “slander” can be used both as a noun and a verb, when it appears in a clause, we prefer using the verb form rather than the noun, followed by another verb. According to the *Longman Dictionary*, “calumny” and “falsehood” are typically used as nouns and rarely collocate with other verbs (Longman, 2014). The *Almaany Dictionary* defines the noun “Buhtān” as “aspersion, calumny, defamation, fabrication, false accusation, falsehood, falsity, lie, slander, traducement, untruth, vilification” (Almaany, n.d.). Similarly, the *Hans Wehr Dictionary* lists “slander”, “false accusation”, “lie” and “untruth” as equivalents for “Buhtān” (Cowan, 1976).

As for the third key term—‘Yaftarīnahū’—the *Almaany Dictionary* suggests using terms such as “fabricate,” “lie,” “aspersion,” “calumny,” “false accusation,” “falsehood,” “slander,” and others (Almaany, n.d.). *Hans Wehr* also lists the following equivalents for the simple form of ‘Yaftarīnahū’: “to fabricate/invent” (Cowan, 1976). To understand how native speakers use the concept of slander, we need to refer again to the *Longman Dictionary* to see which verbs collocate with terms like “calumny,” “slander,” and “lie” to accurately convey the meaning of the verse (Longman, 2014). According to the first table, translators have used five verbs for the verb ‘Yaftarīnahū’: “forge,” “carry,” “invent,” “devise,” and “fabricate.” We now need to examine the meanings of these five verbs to determine which one best fits the context of the verse.

The *Longman Dictionary* defines these five verbs as follows (Longman, 2014):

- **‘Forge’:** The second definition of this verb aligns more closely with the meaning of the verse: “to illegally copy something, especially something printed or written, to make people think it is real.”
- **‘Devise’:** “To plan or invent a new way of doing something.”
- **‘Fabricate’:** “To invent a story or piece of information in order to deceive someone.”
- **‘Invent’** (second meaning): “To think of an idea or story, etc., that is not true, usually to deceive people.”
- **‘Carry’:** Those translators who used “carry” may have referred to the rest of the verse, which addresses carrying an illegitimate child in the womb, or it could refer to the lie they tell their husbands, for which they are responsible.

The final key phrase is ‘bayna aydīhinna wa arjūlihinna’. The literal translation of this phrase could be “between their hands and feet,” which refers to the illegitimate child within the womb, as the womb is located between the upper and lower parts of the body. Alternatively, it could be translated as “between their arms and legs” to indicate the illegitimate child when held in the mother's embrace or lying at her feet.

According to the second table, six different naturalizing translations are provided for the verse. These translators divide the verse into two parts and offer naturalizing translations for each. The first part addresses the concept of slandering, while the second part refers to the lie they tell and the illegitimate child they bear.

For the first part of the verse, the following verbs are used: ‘accuse, indulge in slander, bring false charges, commit perjury, utter slander, bring a calumny’. To ensure the accuracy of these translations, we can refer to the Longman Dictionary (Longman, 2014):

- Accuse: “To say that you believe someone is guilty of a crime or of doing something wrong.”
- Indulge in: “To allow yourself to do or have something that you enjoy, especially something considered bad for you.”
- False charges: “A written or spoken statement blaming someone for doing something wrong or illegal.”
- Perjury: “The crime of telling a lie after promising to tell the truth in a court of law, or a lie told in this manner.”

Regarding the second part of the verse, the following phrases are used: ‘fabricated themselves, falsely devising it out of nothingness, forging falsehood, as to parenthood, forged of themselves, inventing falsehoods.’ These translations emphasize the act of creating or inventing a falsehood or lie.

All of these terms have been clarified above, except for the following two:

- ‘*As to parenthood*’ refers to the false charges made by women against their husbands regarding their parenthood, when in fact they were not the parents.
- ‘*Out of nothingness*’ refers to the lie told to the men about being the real father, when they were not. In other words, the women accused the men without any basis in reality.

Structural Analysis: The analysis has been introduced in two categories as determined by the selected theoretical framework:

Translations Employing the Alienating Method: Table 4 further above shows that Ahmed Raza Khan, Arberry, Pickthall, and Sahih International have fully adopted the alienating method of translation. However, determining whether the translation method used for the verse under study is fully alienating, mostly alienating/naturalizing, or fully naturalizing largely depends on the second part of the verse. For the first part, both naturalizing and alienating translations tend to be similar. The translators who employed the alienating method did not offer idiomatic translations.

In other words, they did not replace the Arabic idiom with its English counterpart, if one exists. Among the thirteen translators, Qaribullah & Darwish and Maududi offer translations that differ from the others. While the verse contains two Arabic verbs, these translators opted to use a single verb that encapsulates the meaning of both verbs simultaneously. As a result, their translations are shorter than those of the other translators.

These two translators did not adopt a fully alienating approach, as some words in the verse were not consistently translated into a more natural structure. Therefore, it can be argued that Qaribullah & Darwish and Maududi employed a “mostly alienating” method.

Translations Employing Naturalizing Method. Ahmed Ali, Asad, Helali & Khan, Qarai, Sarwar, Shakir, and Yusuf Ali are among the translators who used the absolutely naturalizing method. The second part of the verse requires additional explanation beyond the translation to convey the full meaning, otherwise the message may be unclear, leaving the reader confused.

Some translators, such as Helali and Khan and Sarwar, included extra clarification within their translations, while others did not. In the case of these two translators, they translated only the first part of the verse, offering further explanation in brackets for the second part. Like the other group, their translations do not feature idiomatic expressions.

4.2. Assessment of Translations of Qur'ānic Idioms (60:12).

The quality of the translation of this verse “وَلَا يَأْتِيَنَّ بِهِمَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهِمَا يَنْزِيلُ الْأُنْزِيلَ وَأَرْجُلُهُنَّ” was assessed.

Alienating/Naturalizing Methods: For the translation of this Qur'ānic verse, Ahmed Raza Khan, Arberry, Pickthall, and Sahih International employed the absolutely alienating method. The idiom in the second part of this verse is particularly challenging, as it may be difficult for the translator to convey both the meaning and the intended message without resorting to naturalizing translation or providing additional explanation. In other words, the reader may not fully grasp the verse's implications by merely relying on the denotative meanings of the words used.

All the aforementioned translators rendered this verse literally, using phrases like “between their hands and feet” or “arms and legs” to refer to the concept of becoming pregnant. Structures such as “bringing forth a slander/calumny that they have invented/fabricated between their arms and legs” may sound unnatural and confusing to people from different cultures, as the idea of “becoming pregnant illegitimately” is not typically expressed this way in English.

In fact, this method of translation may not be clear to the target reader without further clarification. Since the Holy Qur'ān was revealed to guide us in leading the best life and to warn us against evil deeds, it should be translated in a manner that clearly conveys the Word of Allah. If the meaning of the verse is not easily understood by the reader, then what is the point of translating the Glorious Qur'ān?

Maududi and Qaribullah and Darwish primarily employed the alienating method, with their translations being similar to those using the completely alienating approach. The only distinction is that Maududi, along with Qaribullah & Darwish, did not restrict themselves to maintaining the exact word count of the original verse.

On the other hand, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Sarwar, Qarai, Helali & Khan, Asad, and Ahmed Ali all used the completely naturalizing method. Among them, Helali & Khan and Sarwar are the only two translators who explicitly clarified the main message of the idiom within brackets. Helali & Khan translated it as “by making illegal children belonging to their husbands,” while Sarwar used the phrase “such as ascribing others’ children to their husband”. This approach ensures that the reader fully understands the meaning Allah intends when referring to a calumny brought between one’s hands and feet.

Shakir, Yusuf Ali, Qarai, Ahmed Ali, and Asad did not address the concept of illegitimate pregnancy. While their translations follow the naturalizing method and literally translate the phrase “between their hands and feet”, their translations remain unclear. They only refer to the falsehood that some people intentionally invent.

Asad, in particular, used the phrase “out of nothingness”, which does not accurately capture the meaning of the Arabic word “Yaftarīnahū”. Based on the analysis of verse (60:12), two translators employed the mostly alienating method, six used the absolutely alienating method, and nine followed the absolutely naturalizing method.

4.4. Analysis of translations of Qur’ānic idioms (61:8)

The following selection of verse was analyzed: *يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ*. The verses of the Holy Qur’ān serve as a means of guidance and prosperity for humanity.

Content Analysis: This particular verse addresses the atheists who sought to obliterate this guidance and prevent people from receiving the Word of Allah with their unjust words. However, they failed to realize that not only will the religion of Allah, Jalla Jalaaluh, never perish, but it will indeed spread across the entire world. They labeled the Glorious Qur’ān as magic and sought to diminish its influence on the hearts of people, thereby hindering their spiritual growth.

Yet, the Noble Qur’ān is a sun that illuminates and revitalizes the world, while the atheists saw it merely as a feeble, fleeting candle, whose light they believed could be extinguished by a mere puff of air. Their futile attempts are highlighted and criticized in this verse, emphasizing that the light of Allah is inextinguishable (Hosseini Hamedani, 2001, p. 329).

Translational Analysis

Table 5. Translations of Qur'ānic Idioms (61:8)

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ		
1	Ahmed Ali	They want to extinguish the light of God by uttering blasphemies. But God wills to perfect His light
2	Ahmed Raza Khan	They wish to put out Allah's light with their mouths, whereas Allah will perfect His light
3	Arberry	They desire to extinguish with their mouths, the light of God; but God will perfect His light
4	Asad	They aim to extinguish God's light with their utterances: but God has willed to spread His light in all its fullness
5	Daryabadi	Fain would they extinguish the light of Allah is with their mouths and Allah is going to perfect His light
6	Helali & Khan	They intend to put out the Light of Allah (i.e. the religion of Islam, this Qur'ān, and Prophet Muhammad SAW) with their mouths. But Allah will complete His Light
7	Itani	They want to extinguish God's Light with their mouths; but God will complete His Light
8	Maududi	They seek to extinguish Allah's light (by blowing) with their mouths, but Allah shall spread His light in all its fullness
9	Mubarak Puri	They intend to put out the Light of Allah with their mouths. But Allah will bring His Light to perfection
10	Pickthall	Fain would they put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light
11	Qarai	They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light
12	Qaribullah & Darwish	They seek to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths; but Allah will complete His Light
13	Sahih International	They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light
14	Sarwar	They want to put out the light of God with their mouths, but God will certainly make His light shine forever
15	Shakir	They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths but Allah will perfect His light
16	Wahiduddin Khan	they wish to put His light out with their mouths. But He will perfect His light
17	Yusuf Ali	Their intention is to extinguish Allah's Light (by blowing) with their mouths: But Allah will complete (the revelation of) His Light

Interpretational Analysis: Based on the Qur'ānic exegeses referenced, most translations offer similar interpretations of the selected verse.

Exegeses-Based Definitions

Al-Mizān Exegesis explains that in this verse the preposition “li” in this verse refers to the means by which the light of Allah, Jalla Jalaaluh, is being extinguished. This symbolizes the intention of the Jews attempting to snuff out a great light with a small and ineffective means, resulting in darkness. The term “yutfiū” means “to extinguish a light”. Extinguishing light with a mouth can be done by blowing (Tabatabai, 1974, p. 430).

The Kāshif Exegesis: According to this verse, the Jews sought to undermine Islam with their deceit and lies (as the words emerge from the mouth). In reality, they were struggling against divine power, while Allah remains dominant over all creation (Mughniya, 2004, p. 525).

Summation: As evident from the interpretations provided, the core meaning of this verse seems to revolve around 'the futile attempt of the False in trying to prevent the dominance of the Right'.

Linguistic Analysis of Translation Methods. The analysis has been displayed in the tables below:

Table 6. Translations Employing Alienating Method

مِمَّ	بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ	نُورَ	لِيُطْفِئُوا	يُرِيدُونَ
Perfect	Their mouths	Light	Extinguish	Want
Bring to perfection			Put out	Wish
Complete				Desire
				aim
				Intend
				Seek

Table 7. Translations Employing Naturalizing Method

مِمَّ نُورِهِ	بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ
Spread His light in all its fullness	By uttering blasphemies
Make His light shine forever	With their utterances

Table 6 in our linguistic analysis presents five key terms for which seventeen translators offer different literal translations. The first key term is 'yurīdūna,' for which six possible equivalents are provided.

Dictionary-Based Analyses:

Almaany Arabic English Dictionary lists several translations, including 'aim at,' 'aspire to,' 'willing to,' 'desire,' 'mean,' 'intend,' 'have in mind,' 'want,' 'wish,' and 'seek,' among others (Almaany, n.d.).

Hans Wehr Arabic English Dictionary, similarly, offers definitions such as 'want,' 'wish,' 'desire,' 'intend,' 'strive,' and 'aim' (Cowan, 1976). As evident, all the translators based their renditions on one of the suggested meanings from these two authoritative dictionaries.

Almaany Arabic English Dictionary. The next key term is "liyutḥfi'ū", for which the translators use either "extinguish" or "put out". Almaany Arabic English Dictionary provides the following equivalents: "extinguish", "put out", "quench", and "smother", while the Hans Wehr Dictionary suggests "put out", "quench", "extinguish" and "extinct" (Almaany, n.d.; Cowan, 1976).

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: To determine which of these English equivalents is more accurate, we should consult the common definitions in the Longman

Dictionary. “Put out”: to make a light stop working by pressing or turning a button or switch. “Extinguish”: to make a fire or light stop burning or shining. “Quench”: to stop a fire from burning (Longman, 2014). According to Longman, either of the first two equivalents is proper (Longman, 2014). As for the third key term, “nūr,” all the translators using the alienating method of translation opted for the term “light” as the equivalent.

Almaany Arabic English Dictionary: The same applies to the fourth key term, “afwāhihim”; here, too, all the translators chose the unique equivalent “their mouths.” The final key term is “mutimm,” the base form of which is “tamma.” The Almaany Dictionary provides “accomplish, complete, finish, fulfill” as equivalents for this verb (Almaany, n.d.).

Hans Wehr Arabic English Dictionary offers the following: “complete, finish, perfect” (Cowan, 1976). Concerning the second table in the linguistic analysis, two of the translators used the naturalizing method for translating this verse. One of them used “utterance,” while the other used “uttering blasphemies” to convey the connotation of the term “afwāhihim.” These two translators also translated the phrase “mutimmu nūrihi” differently from the others. One used “spread to its fullness” to express the meaning of the verb “mutimm,” while the other used “make shine forever” for this purpose.

Structural Analysis. The analysis has been introduced in two categories as determined by the selected theoretical framework:

Translations Employing Alienating Method: Concerning the structures used by the translators, all employed the coordinator “but” to connect the two clauses, except for Ahmed Raza Khan, who used “whereas,” and Daryabadi, who used “and” to join the two clauses. As for the second clause of the verse, all the translators, except for two, preferred to use the future tense to refer to Allah’s decision. However, for this purpose, Daryabadi used the structure “to be going to,” Maududi used the modal “shall,” and the others preferred the modal “will.”

It is worth mentioning that Maududi, Pickthall, and Daryabadi used an archaic style. Maududi used the term “shall” in his translation, while Pickthall and Daryabadi both used the term “fain” and began the sentence with this term, followed by the modal “would”.

Translations Employing Naturalizing Method: Reviewing the table of translations shows that Ahmed Ali and Asad are the two translators who used the “mostly alienating/naturalizing” method of translation. They only referred to the connotation of the term “afwāhihim,” while other terms were translated literally. Therefore, their translations cannot be considered “absolutely alienating/naturalizing.”

The two translators who used the future tense for the translation of the second clause of this verse are Ahmed Ali and Asad, respectively employing the simple present tense and present perfect. Although Helali & Khan translated this verse using the alienating method, they provided the reader with extra connotative clarification.

4.5. Assessment of the Quality of Translations of Qur’ānic Idioms (61:8).

The TQA of the ayah was done “يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ”.

Analysis of the Translations: Asad and Ahmed Ali are the only two translators who used the mostly alienating method. The reason Asad’s translation is regarded as mostly alienating

is that he used the term “utterances” as an equivalent for “afwāhihim”. He employed the connotative meaning of this term to help the reader understand the image that Allah, Jalla Jalaaluh, depicted. Asad also used the phrase “spread in all its fullness” as an equivalent for “mutimm,” which is not accurate, since “mutimm” means to “perfect,” not to “spread.”

Ahmed Ali has also used the phrase “uttering blasphemies” to refer to the notion of the verse: the means that enemies use to destroy the divine religion, while “afwāhihim” means “mouths.” He also used the verb “will” to emphasize divine power and His enemies’ weakness in this sense, even though this verb is not directly mentioned in Arabic. Regarding this Qur’ānic idiom, all the translators, except for the two aforementioned, used the absolutely alienating method to translate it.

Ahmed Raza Khan rendered a plain translation, successful in terms of choosing accurate equivalents. However, due to his absolutely alienating translation, a question may arise for the reader as to what it means to put out the light of Allah with their mouths. This issue also applies to the translations of Arberry, Mubarakpuri, Qarai, Sahih International, Wahiduddin Khan, and Shakir.

Daryabadi and Pickthall used a totally archaic structure: “fain would they...,” which made their translations unfamiliar to today’s generation, as such a structure is no longer used in contemporary English. This is contrary to one of the aims of translating the Noble Qur’ān: to make this Book accessible, practical, and understandable for people of all languages and age groups around the world.

As they always did, Helali & Khan used explanative brackets to clarify the notion of light: “i.e. the religion of Islam, this Qur’ān, and Prophet Muhammad SAW.” It is worth mentioning that none of the translators, except for Helali & Khan, clarified the notion of “Allah’s light.” Maududi also used “spread,” which is not a precise equivalent for “mutimm” in this translation.

He included an extra explanation inside brackets, “by blowing,” for which there is no direct equivalent in Arabic. Sarwar used the phrase “make shine,” which is not a precise equivalent for “mutimmu nūrihi.” He also used the adverb “certainly” to emphasize Allah’s willpower, which does not exist in the Arabic verse.

Qaribullah and Darwish, Yusuf Ali, Itani, and Helali & Khan are the translators who employed the verb “complete” as an equivalent for “mutimm.” Although linguistically speaking, this is not an incorrect choice, the problem with this verb is that the reader may assume that the religion of Allah is incomplete and that He is supposed to complete it from now on.

Yusuf Ali, like Maududi, used the phrase “by blowing.” He also used the phrase “the revelation of” to explain the notion of perfection of Allah’s light and to emphasize that Islam is a religion revealed by Him. According to the above analyses, concerning the verse (61:8), fifteen translators employed the absolutely alienating method of translation for this verse, and only two translators used the mostly alienating method.

5. Results

5.1. The First Ayah (60:12)

In this chapter, we classified the translations into two main groups, each adopting one of Schleiermacher's methods of translation. By doing such a classification, we concluded that some translations fall between these two categories. That is to say, they are neither "absolutely alienating" nor "absolutely naturalizing"; rather, they are mostly oriented towards one of these two extremes. The translations of Qaribullah & Darwish and Maududi are "mostly alienating", meaning that they have mostly benefited from the alienating method of translation, but we can still trace some natural aspects in their works.

After completing the three-step analysis (interpretational, linguistic, structural), it was concluded that if the second part of the verse is translated using the alienating method, much of the meaning and the message hidden beyond this part of the verse will not be conveyed. That is why some translators provided their readers with clarification in addition to their naturalized translations. Regarding Waddington's model of TQA, the following table can be concluded.

Table 8. Ranking the Twelve Translations (60:12)

Translator	Level of Transfer of ST content & fluency of TL text	Task Completion	Mark
Helali & Khan	Level 4	Almost completely successful	8
Sarwar	Level 4	Almost completely successful	7
Yusuf Ali, Qarai, Ahmed Ali, Shakir	Level 3	Adequate	6
Asad	Level 3	Adequate	5
Sahih International, Pickthall, Arberry, Ahmed Raza Khan	Level 2	Inadequate	4
Qaribullah & Darwish, Maududi	Level 2	Inadequate	3

The above table clearly shows that one translation received a mark of 8, one received a mark of 7, four received a mark of 6, one received a mark of 5, four received a mark of 4, and finally, two received a mark of 3. In the above table, three levels are determined for the translations. The quality of the translation of six translators is level 2, indicating the inadequate quality of most of the translations for this verse. The quality of five translations is level 3, considered adequate, and the quality level of two translations is level 4, almost completely successful.

Figure 1 compares levels of translation quality based on the selected theoretical framework. Reviewing the above two phrasal verbs, the first is mostly used in informal situations. Our source text is the Word of Allah, Jalla Jalaaluh, and is, thus, highly precious. For this reason, we cannot use informal phrases and expressions, even though they might be precise. As for the second phrasal verb, it can be used in the translation because it is formal and conveys the meaning.

The English Idioms and Phrases Implying the Notion of Bringing Accusation

Since there is no English idiom that exactly matches the notion of “bringing accusation,” we searched for phrasal verbs with the same meaning and identified the following two:

Cooking up (informal):

- Merriam Webster: “to invent (something, such as an idea, excuse, etc.) to deal with a particular situation” (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.);
- Cambridge Dictionary: “to invent something using your imagination and sometimes dishonestly” (Cambridge, n.d.);
- Collins Dictionary: “To plan a dishonest scheme or make up a story” (Forsyth, 2014);
- Longman Activator: “To invent an excuse, reason, plan, especially one that is slightly dishonest or unlikely to work” (Longman, 2014).

Trump up (phrasal verb) + charge:

- Merriam Webster: “to concoct, especially with intent to deceive” (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.);
- Cambridge Dictionary: “To give or use false information so that someone will be accused of doing something wrong and punished” (Cambridge, n.d.);
- Collins Dictionary: “To concoct or invent (a charge, accusation, etc.) so as to deceive or implicate someone” (Forsyth, 2014);
- Longman Activator: “To concoct, especially with intent to deceive” (Longman, 2014).

5.2. *The Second Ayah (61:8)*

Since the translations were almost identical to one another, the marks given to the translations based on Waddington’s model of TQA were also similar.

Table 9. Results of the Second Ayah (61:8)

Translator	Level of Transfer of ST content &	Task Completion	Mark
Arberry, Wahiduddin Khan, Shakir, Ahmed Raza Khan, Yusuf Ali, Helali & Khan, Itani, Maududi, Asad, Mubarak Puri, Qarai,	Level 5	Successful	9
Pickthall, Daryabadi	Level 4	Almost completely successful	7

Concerning the verse (61:8), the marks given to the translations are not varied. Based on the above table, fifteen translations received a mark of 9, and two received a mark of 7. Thus, the quality of the translations is categorized into two levels: 4 and 5. The quality of the two translations, which received a mark of 7, is level 4, and the quality of the fifteen translations with a mark of 9 is level 5. Therefore, it can be argued that almost all the translators were successful in their work.

English Idioms and Phrases Implying the Notion of ‘Putting Out Sth With a Mouth’

Reference to the dictionaries provided the following definitions:

Blow something out:

- Merriam Webster: “To extinguish by a gust” (Merriam & Merriam, n.d.);
- Cambridge Dictionary: “If a flame blows out or you blow it out, it stops burning when a person or the wind blows on it” (Cambridge, n.d.);
- Collins Dictionary: “If you blow out a flame or a candle, you blow at it so that it stops burning” (Forsyth, 2014);
- Longman Activator: “To make a flame or fire stop burning by blowing on it” (Longman, 2014).

Suggestions for Translations: The following contains suggestions for translations to substitute the current works under study:

Suggestions for the translation of the first verse (61:8)

“Blow out” is the closest verbal phrase to refer to the notion meant by the verse. The verb phrase “blow out” encompasses both meanings: “*Itfā*” and “*bi-afwāhihim*,” as this phrase means “to extinguish a light using the mouth.” Therefore, using this phrase, we can offer a translation based on the ‘naturalizing’ method of Schleiermacher: “They want to blow out the light of God [with their blasphemies], yet Allah completes His light”. Concerning the alienating method of translation, we can also offer a meaningful translation in line with this approach: “They want to extinguish the light of God with their mouths, yet Allah completes His light”.

Suggestions for the translation of the first verse (60:12)

Taking into consideration the points of strength and weakness in the thirteen translations, the following two translations are offered:

If we are to render an “absolutely alienating” or “mostly alienating” translation of the verse, we should benefit from the translations of Sahih International, Arberry, Ahmed Raza Khan, and Pickthall, whose marks were higher than others employing the same method. Here is our suggestion for this method: “nor bring false accusation against others which they themselves have fabricated between their hands and feet.”

Looking at the result table, we find that Helali & Khan and Sarwar were the two translators who received the highest mark among those who employed the “absolutely naturalizing” method of translation. Keeping their translations in mind, we suggest the following: “nor trump up a charge against others which they themselves have fabricated [by bearing an illegitimate child in their womb].”

6. Conclusions

As in any language, Arabic contains language-specific idioms that reflect Arab culture and environment. Idioms enrich the language by capturing human experiences and the way people perceive the world around them. Different cultures conceptualize reality in unique ways, which gives idioms their cultural characteristics. Translating such idioms into another language can pose comprehension challenges if the translator is not well-versed in Arabic culture. This explains why some existing translations of Qur’ānic idioms fail to fully convey their intended depth of meaning.

The findings of this study show that most translators face both linguistic and cultural challenges when translating idiomatic expressions, as these are deeply intertwined with cultural values, metaphorical aspects, and stylistic features. If we claim that translation should involve no loss of information, then, in reality, translation—and even communication—would be impossible. No form of communication, whether intralinguistic, interlinguistic, or intersemiotic, can occur without some degree of information loss, and translation loss is an inherent part of the process.

This study also demonstrates that both Muslim intellectuals and English translators agree that culture-bound elements of the Noble Qur’ān are untranslatable. Based on this understanding, the idea of ‘absolute equivalence’ for idiomatic expressions—true representations of culture-bound concepts—does not hold. Therefore, a literal translation of such expressions inevitably results in a loss of meaning, ambiguity, or even a distortion of the original message.

Foreignizing ST idioms, or offering a faithful translation, provides the reader with an opportunity to access a different way of thinking about the world. The translator bears the responsibility of conveying the cultural heritage of the ST to the target language readers. Domesticating ST idioms is possible when there is an overlap between cultures, allowing the same situations to be reproduced in the target culture. However, it becomes more difficult when these idioms are specific to a particular speech community and express knowledge unique to that community’s mentality. Proponents of this approach argue that translation should emphasize universal elements to bridge cultures, rather than separate them through literal translation.

Nonetheless, there are translations that benefit from using either of these methods, meaning the translation may be a mixture of both approaches. In such cases, the translation can be considered either “almost naturalizing” or “almost alienating.” When translating sacred texts, especially the Glorious Qur’ān, the loss of meaning becomes more prominent and raises questions about the legitimacy of the translation due to the spiritual, historical, theological, and linguistic aspects involved. It is the translator’s responsibility to find appropriate ways to compensate for these losses, using translation methods supported by well-tested theories.

In general, the translation of idioms should aim to produce the same stylistic effect on the TL reader as the original idioms do on the SL reader. In the case of idiomatic expressions, the underlying message must be conveyed. Based on this premise, a “thought-for-thought” translation is recommended.

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